

THE
UNFASHIONABLE
WIFE.
A NOVEL.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.



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THE
UNFASHIONABLE WIFE:
A
MORAL HISTORY.

LETTER I.

*The Hon. EDWARD BYRON, to Sir
GEORGE GRAY, Bart.*

Astell Park.

YOU tell me, that I have been here a week, and have not written above four lines to you, though the beauty of Mrs. *Astell*, which has reached your ears, would furnish matter enough to fill a quire of paper.

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B

You

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You have certainly been misinformed; Mrs. *Astell* is, indeed, reckoned very handsome by many people; but, in my opinion, she is rather an agreeable than a beautiful woman; and when I add, that she is a very Unfashionable Wife, to a confounded bad Husband, what is there left for me to say about her? And yet I could talk of her for hours together, though she is a character rather to be esteemed than loved. By her modesty and diffidence, and by her uncommon delicacy of disposition and constitution, she is so far superior to the majority of her sex, that one is more inclined to look on her as an Angelic Being, than as a pretty piece of Flesh and Blood.

We have other Females here, who are not without their attractions; but, I cannot tell how it is, they do not throw me into any agitation.

Here

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Here is Mrs. *Oswald*, a fine young Widow, and Miss *Hales*, both of them Mrs. *Astell*'s intimate friends: Her nearest neighbour, at the distance only of two miles, is Lady *Freelove*, another handsome woman. She is wiser, however, than Mrs. *Astell*; she is determined to make the most of herself, and troubles not her head about my Lord, who amuses himself, agreeably to his own taste, with every tolerable woman who falls in his way. He has made some vigorous attacks against the Lady of this Mansion, but she treats him with so cool an indifference, so mortifying a neglect, that he must certainly be cured of his passion by her discouraging behaviour. Every man, indeed, meets with the same contempt from her, that is, if he presumes to mention a syllable about Love to her. On every other subject she will con-

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verse with a politeness and a freedom absolutely enchanting. I have frequently observed her, when the company with her have all been differently engaged, and have often wondered how a woman, tied for life to such a fellow as *Astell*, and scrupulous, I believe, about making herself amends for her ill treatment with any body else, can appear so perfectly easy. She cannot *love* him—that is impossible—but then, is it not amazing, that she, admired, followed, and, no doubt, solicited as she is, does not love some other person? And yet I never saw the slightest symptoms of that kind. She assumes, at times, a reserve which awes the most enterprizing of her admirers, and prevents them from venturing to attempt any improper freedoms.

Mrs. *Oswald* and Miss *Hales* have their Lovers, but they would all quit
them

them immediately, to be upon flattering terms with Mrs. *Astell*.—How uncommon a Wife is *she*, George, in this age, whose marriage, instead of laying any restraint upon a woman's actions, seems to authorize her to take the more irregular liberties. I am often astonished to think of *Astell's* having shackled himself with the fetters of Matrimony, as he was always a remarkably warm advocate for Freedom. His fetters, however, sit extremely easy on him. He has no idea of constancy, no notion of a conjugal attachment. Matrimony, to be sure, must be horribly disgusting to a man of his turn. I have been informed, that his Father and her Uncle made up the match. Two more opposite beings were certainly never united.—*Astell* is not disagreeable in his person, nor does he want address; but he has a thousand faults,

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setting aside his licentious principles, which must unavoidably render him despicable in the eyes of an amiable woman, like his *Maria*.

You will tell me, perhaps, that were I to love Mrs. *Astell*, I should discover sentiments still more reprehensible than those which I condemn in her Husband. Don't be in a hurry, *George*; I am not fond of seducing the wives of other men, yet I honestly declare, that I should not think myself in the least criminal by assisting a charming woman to take her revenge; that is, with her own consent.—I am no seducer; but I really do not perceive the smallest propensity in her to join with me, or any other man, upon so laudable an occasion. Such a Woman, now, *George*, if she was to be had, would almost tempt a man to marry.—But she is settled

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tled for life, and, therefore, it will be quite idle to entertain any thoughts of her now. The point is, whether a man can think of any other woman when *she* is in his way.—You never saw her, *George*; I will attempt to give you a sketch of her; take notice, I give you only a sketch; no Painter can do her justice. Her Eyes are, at the same time forbidding and inviting. She is of a very agreeable Height, and she is elegantly formed. Her Complexion is fair, and when it is animated with a blush, the innocent loveliness of her looks is not to be expressed. Her Eyes are out of the reach of description: I shall only say, that they are of a bright and beautiful blue. Her Teeth are extremely white, and *well set*, in the most regular manner conceivable. Her Lips are full and red; her Hair is of a dark, yet glossy chest-

B 4.

nut.

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nut. So much for her personal Charms. Her discretion is prodigious; yet she, at proper seasons, discovers the most delicious sensibility.

By this time, I imagine, you set me down for a perfect *Enamorado*;—but hold, *George*, I have not yet been coxcomb enough to fall in love with a woman who did not shew some sort of *tendresse* for me. I must not expect that honour here, unless Lady *Freelove* should be able to bring her over; and I fancy she will try, as she seems to hate to see any woman handsomer, or wiser than herself;—if a woman may be called *wife*, *George*, who can be attached to a Husband who is totally indifferent to her.

And so you want to know how we amuse ourselves; why, pretty much as other people do; we ride, we walk, we
sing.

sing, we dance, and make love—that is, all but me. I do not like playing the fool; I chuse to be in earnest. You will say, probably, that by such a choice I give the greatest proof of my folly.—No matter—every one in his way, and according to his own inclination. I shall not, in a hurry, I believe, have *my* inclination gratified: I chat with all the women; but I trifle with none: I do not approve of trifling: It is not right to encourage women to suppose that every man who takes the least notice of them, must be enamour'd with them. Such encouragements only fill their heads with nonsense, and stimulate them to flirt with every fellow who flutters about them, and to make improper advances. A woman renders herself extremely contemptible, when she is always upon the look out for admiration. She departs too much, by

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so doing, from that amiable reserve, and winning delicacy, which makes a beautiful woman still more lovely, and which even throws a loveliness over those women who have no pretensions to beauty. But I forget; you are thoroughly acquainted with my sentiments upon this subject, and do not want a repetition of them. Well, then, we divert ourselves according to our respective dispositions. Mrs. *Oswald* reads, works, and is musical. Miss *Hales* plays finely upon the organ and guittar; and Mrs. *Astell* draws, and sings very prettily. Sir *William Frampton* dangles after Mrs. *Oswald*, while *her* eyes wander in search of his Brother. Young *Randolph* singles out Miss *Hales*. Lord *Freelove* teazes Mrs. *Astell*, whom, in mere pity, I have taken under *my* protection, as I see that she cannot endure him. I wonder whom she loves—Not
her

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her Husband, surely?—Heaven forbid!—No—impossible; for he not only follows every woman he sees, but is ever both ill-bred, and ill-tempered to her.

We are to go, in a large party, to-morrow, to see Lord T---'s house and gardens. *Astell*, like a wrong-headed fool, when the scheme was proposed by Lord *Freelove*, insisted upon his Wife's going in *his* phaëton, in order to have Lady *Freelove* in his own *whisky*. Poor Mrs. *Astell* coloured, and trembled. I pitied her from my soul, and, coming up to her, said, softly, "Are you afraid?" "Indeed I am," answered she. "Will you trust yourself with me, in my *Italian* chair?" She smiled, and thanked me. I am therefore going to give all necessary orders.

Yours sincerely,

EDWARD BYRON.

L E T T E R II.

From the Same to the Same.

WE had a very agreeable day ; rather let me say, *I* had a very agreeable day. I spent my whole time in trying to make every thing pleasing to this most charming woman, who seemed very well satisfied with my attentions, and quite happy in having escaped Lord *Freelove's* persecutions. I did not think she was half so amiable as I found her, upon a nearer intimacy. She is not only exceedingly lovely, but she has a great deal of good sense and vivacity, mixed with a sensibility, which is altogether enchanting. I cannot describe my surprize at her uncommon discretion, especially as she is tied to such an unthinking wretch as *Astell*. I am still more surprized at *his* strange neglect

neglect of her. Were I possess of so invaluable a treasure, I should estimate it above my life. In short, *George*, I am half in love with her. I never conversed with so charming a creature in every respect. My head is so full of her, that I can scarce think of any thing else. How chearfully could I spend my time with her, constantly endeavouring to promote her happiness! No woman ever deserved the tender assiduities of our sex so much, and every man is eager, with such assiduities, to be distinguished by her; yet she encourages not *one* of her assiduous admirers. She will not, indeed, admit of common services from every man; I think, therefore, that I am particularly honoured, when she allows me to assist in procuring any kind of pleasure or convenience for her.

Lord

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Lord *Freelove*, half angry at my having deprived him of Mrs. *Astell*, addressed himself to all the women, but they all pleaded their fears. He then seized *Randolph* by the arm, and swore that *he* should be his companion till he could meet with somebody to his fancy of the other sex.

Miss *Hales*, I thought, looked disconcerted: She turned pale, but said nothing.

Sir *William Frampton* begged the honour of Mrs. *Oswald's* company in his post-chaise, and Col. *Frampton* was left to take care of Miss *Hales*.

In this manner we were coupled, but not paired, at least not all of us. Lady *Freelove* and *Astell* seemed to be most suitable to each other, as the former discovered as much intrepidity
as

as the latter. Lady *Freelove* was quite as fearless as her companion. She is, indisputably, a very handsome woman; but there is an assurance in her behaviour, a freedom in her air, which takes off all that *femality* which is pleasing in her sex, and renders her, in *my* eyes, altogether disgusting. I do not like to see too much courage in women; yet I would not have them scream at a spider, and shrink at the sight of a frog, a creature infinitely more harmless than themselves: No, I would have them preserve that enchanting softness, that amiable timidity, which courts our protection, and throws them quite defenceless into our arms. Just such a lovely creature is Mrs. *Astell*; she has no affected fears, no imaginary terrors; she is as artless as she is amiable. The modest glow of unsullied virtue damasks her beautiful

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teous cheek, and the rising smile of conscious innocence brightens her charming features; yet that winning smile was sometimes obscured by a momentary gloom, which seemed to result rather from a train of disagreeable thoughts rushing into her mind, than from any desire, on her side, to encourage melancholy ideas. She looked, indeed, as if she would have dismissed all such ideas if it had been in her power.

I asked her, venturing, at the same time, to press her hand, what had occasioned so sudden a change in her?

She replied, "It is not always possible for us to command our looks, though we wish they were not so expressive of our feelings."

"You

"You do not then feel so happy as
"I wish you to be," said I.

"I confess I am not happy," replied
she, "when I think that I shall soon
"lose Miss *Hales*."

What, is she going to be married?

No; but her Father, who is exceedingly fond of her, and whose chief joy she has been since the death of her mother, cannot spare her any longer.—
When she is gone, I shall have no friend.

Let me supply her place, said I.

At that instant, one of those charming smiles, which I have just mentioned, gleamed over her fine expressive features.

"No *Woman*, replied she, can possibly supply my dear *Marianne's* place
in

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“ in my heart ; no *Man*, certainly, can
“ expect to succeed her.”

How ? answered I ; do Husbands allow of such violent friendships ? and do they not, by such an allowance, exclude themselves from the same right over the hearts of their Wives, as they are entitled to over their persons ?

If no other man shares a Wife's affection, replied she, the strictest Husband may, I think, admit of a female friend, provided she is a woman of an unblemished reputation.

What, then, will you think of *me*, who, as I am determined never to marry a woman on whom I do not doat, am also determined never to marry a woman whose heart is not entirely mine. I could not bear to have *my* Wife discover any *affection* for

for the most amiable female friend in the universe.

She made no answer. Mrs. *Oswald* joined us; and the conversation took a different turn.

I spoke only what I really thought, but I fancied that it disconcerted her: Yet why should I fancy so? I dare say she never thinks about *me*. This Miss *Hales*, this *Marianne*, engrosses her whole heart; that heart which *Astell* has lost by his unaccountable indifference, by his barbarous neglect.—Had it been *my* fortune to have seen her first, how tenderly should I have cherished her, how extravagantly should I have loved her!—But, perhaps, this Miss *Hales* would even then have been her favourite, and would have claimed, from the privilege of friendship, a thousand little attentions, every one of which,

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which, I should have supposed due to *me* alone.—I detest these female friends, they are an abominable tribe; and I sincerely believe that they have *separated* many a couple, who might have been, without their *friendly offices*, uninterruptedly happy.—I do not, indeed, rank Miss *Hales* among the mischievous female friends of the age, but — I wish Mrs. *Astell* was not so closely attached to her.

I am,

Dear GRAY,

Yours, &c.

E. B.

LET-

L E T T E R III.

From the Same to the Same.

MARIANNE is still here, and perpetually at Mrs. *Astell's* elbow; I would give a good deal to have Miss *Hales* otherwise engaged; I am sometimes strongly inclined to make love to her myself, on purpose to keep her out of mischief; yet she has a Lover, I fancy, in *Randolph*, who is a very pretty young fellow: She does not, however, pay much regard to him; no more, I imagine, than she would pay to *me*: But if I could draw her from Mrs. *Astell*, I might do some good; that is, I might hinder them from caballing, and enjoy more of the conversation of the *latter*, without a third person, who is now eternally running

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running to her friend, and has no leisure to listen to any body else.

Astell and Lady *Freelove* begin to be weary of each other : Each of them seems to be disposed to a new amour ; they both declare that there never passed any tenderneſſes between them, but nobody believes them, I fancy ; nor are they in the leaſt anxious about the credibility of their declarations ; *Astell* is too careleſs to trouble himſelf about what the world ſays of him ; and Lady *Freelove*, like a high bred Woman of Quality, is above it. She has, in truth, given the world ſo much room to talk of her, that it would be no eaſy matter to ſilence its cenſures.—She begins to be fond of *Randolph*, of Sir *William Frampton*, and, in a word, of every other man ; ſhe is a downright Man-fancier, and her chief delight is in *our*
ſex.

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sex. She has attacked *me* several times, but I have hitherto found means to shy off. There is something so very odious, so extremely disgusting, in the behaviour of a licentious woman, a libertine in petticoats, that it turns the edge of my appetite in a moment. You will call me, perhaps, a squeamish fellow, *George*, but I positively assure you, that I would rather clasp a common prostitute in my arms, who can *coy* it handsomely, than one of these intrepid married women, who are received, indeed, every where by people of character, but who are always *leering* invitation, and giving sufficient encouragement to every man who comes in their way. How widely different from such women is Mrs. *Astell*? She, with uncommon provocations from the most dissolute of Husbands, conducts herself with a discretion hardly to be met with
in

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in any age. I would give the world to know if she loves her Husband; if she ever loved him; I am eagerly desirous to be acquainted with every particular relating to them; yet I do not see in what manner my wishes can be gratified. Could I but worm myself into Mrs. *Astell's* confidence, could I but make a *friendship* with her, she might, perhaps, be in time prevailed on to let me into all those secrets, of which I long most impatiently to be informed: While Miss *Hales* is here, I shall be in a hopeless condition; there is no other woman with whom she has any intimacy, except Mrs. *Oswald*: I am not, however, so much afraid of *her*, as of *Marianne*.

Lady *Freelove* endeavours to persuade Mrs. *Astell* to follow her example, but I think she will not; I do
not

not believe she can possibly become so abandoned a creature: And yet, if her reserve should proceed from a natural coolness, from mere insensibility, she has not half the merit I allow her; she will not also have half the charms I allow her; for, in *my* opinion, the woman who cannot be fondly—violently—nay even romantically attached to a man, is no object deserving his attention. From hence chiefly arises my aversion to the generality of loose women, who, being strongly addicted to voluptuousness, have no relish for the exquisite pleasures which those of the most refined delicacy are alone capable of enjoying, and are commonly the least sentimental beings in the creation. It will ever be my wish to see the woman, whose person I like, as warm in her feelings for me as I am for her, but I shall ever wish, at the same time,

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to see her warmth under the correction of Delicacy. You will tell me, probably, that I desire impossibilities; but I am of another opinion. I have a strange notion that Mrs. *Astell* is the very woman, in search of whom I have long employed myself. She is, it is true, married, yet she has got a confounded bad Husband, and so, *George*, there are some hopes for

Your friend,

E. B.

P. S. Just this moment I have been informed, that Miss *Hales* sets off to-morrow. Mrs. *Astell* herself gave me the information, almost with tears in her eyes. I might also have read her departure in the face of *Randolph*: He loves

Mari-

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Marianne, and she loves—whom?
why Mrs. *Astell*, who pines, and
sighs, and whimpers after ano-
ther woman. Curse these Female
Friendships, I say!

L E T T E R IV.

Mrs. ASTELL to Miss HALES.

IT is impossible, my dear *Marianne*, to tell you how much you are already missed by your *Maria*; and how I wander about from place to place in a vain search after my dearest Friend.

Mr. *Byron* is continually hurrying after me—He tells me, that he will supply *your* place; but that, you know, is not to be done; he ought rather to supply mine. Indeed, my Dear, delicate as my sentiments are with regard to female affection, you cannot, I think, be blamed for discovering a decent degree of it for a man so very amiable as Mr. *Byron* is. A few trifling indiscretions in our behaviour to such a man

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man are pardonable. His person, his manners, and his address, all combine to render him particularly pleasing; and as my dear *Maria* is equally agreeable, how can he avoid singling *her* out, as she has distinguished *him*.

We walked in the shrubbery last night above an hour, and talked of *you*. The nightingales sung over our heads. He was remarkably inquisitive about your disposition, humour, and taste; so very curious, indeed, my Dear, that I thought him rather impertinent; and yet he was exceedingly agreeable.

I walked till I was almost weary. You know how fond I am of those sequestered spots in a garden, which commonly throw the mind into a pleasing tranquillity.

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Just where I was beginning to enjoy that composure, after a day spent in a crowd of mixed, and not very eligible company, some few excepted, *Byron* joined me.

After having chatted with me a good while, he asked me if I was not tired with walking; if I would not sit down?

I told him it was time to return to the house; but he intreated me so earnestly to stay a little longer, that I complied at first, merely because I felt a desire to oblige him; nor did I repent of that desire, for he was unusually entertaining. I fancy you are his Favourite, as he said more than once, that he should be glad to have as strict a friendship with you as I had. I told him such a friendship could not possibly

sibly be accomplished without an attachment of a different nature.

He then asked me, if I thought there could be a Friendship between the two Sexes, without the intermixture of a softer passion?

I replied, that I had many doubts concerning such a Friendship.

He answered, rather warmly, You are mistaken, Madam; there may be a very affectionate Friendship, unaccompanied with the slightest emotions of Love.

We carried on the argument for a considerable time; the night came on, the dew arose, and he, fancying I should get cold, made no resistance to my proposal to go home; but I could not hinder him from putting a clean white pocket handkerchief round my

neck, to keep me from being affected by the damps.

I made a strong opposition, telling him, that his care was entirely unnecessary; but in vain; he persisted. — Too much care cannot be taken of you, said he; and as the man who ought to watch over you with the utmost tenderness and assiduity, neglects the performance of so pleasing a duty, I must undertake it myself, and you must not attempt to oppose me.

I thought him in the wrong here; for, however negligently and unkindly a Husband may behave, his Wife should not encourage any other man to complain of him to her. I told him, therefore, that I saw no faults in Mr. *Astell*, and that supposing I had seen any in him, it was not the business of his *Friend* to remind me of them.

It

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It is certainly my duty, as *Astell's* Friend, answered he, to point out those errors of his, which may, if repeated, be attended with very disagreeable consequences.

To *him* alone, then, Sir, you should point them out, said I, and not to his Wife.

I stand corrected, Madam, replied he, with a low bow, and yield to your superior judgment: But where is the Wife, yourself excepted, who can forgive an indifference, of which no other man in the world can possibly be guilty to her?

Now, my Dear, this was the only part of the conversation which I disliked. Was he not quite wrong, in pointing out Mr. *Astell's* faults to *me*? which are, indeed, between you and

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me, visible enough; but I wish not to appear to see them: I wish to forget them. — I turned the conversation immediately, and *Byron* became quite as agreeable as he was before; though I begin to think that he has taken up too much of my paper; but I imagine that you will be pleased to hear every little particular concerning the behaviour of a man, whom you have, in your own mind, distinguished from the rest of your Admirers.

Randolph is as melancholy in your absence, as I am; nor can all the notice, with which Lady *Freelove* favours him, make him in the least lively. I really wish her Ladyship would remove herself from our part of the country, not that I am now rendered uneasy on *her* account, with Mr.

Astell,

Astell, but I have heavy complaints against her. Since your departure, she has teased me extremely with her company; she is perpetually coming hither, and endeavours, whenever she *does* come, to persuade me to accompany her in her parties of pleasure; parties which are certainly to be avoided, as I may, by complying with her Ladyship's entreaties, throw myself into improper situations, in spite of all my circumspection, and be exposed to a great deal of impertinence, if nothing worse should happen. Indeed, I look upon the infidelity of a Husband, disagreeable as it is, a very trifling consideration, compared with the mischiefs naturally to be expected from an intimacy with a woman of a loose disposition: Though I am not inclined to subscribe to the opinions of those Ladies, who, oddly enough,

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imagine, that even the breath of such women is contagious. — I hope I am not at all in a way to be corrupted by Lady *Freelove*; but I think it is not an easy task to keep up a thoroughly becoming character, in the company of a person who has no reputation to lose. We are not only liable to the sneers of a censorious world, by mixing with people who act with a total disregard of all censure, we are liable also to insolent liberties from the men of professed gallantry about town, who, not without some reason, suppose that she who associates with a licentious woman, has not very rigid ideas concerning female honour. — By mixing with vicious characters, and growing familiar with them, we gradually look on Vice with less and less abhorrence, and so slide, imperceptibly, into the commission of actions, the
bare

bare thoughts of which, before, almost made us shudder. By so doing, we strongly prejudice all the reputable part of the world against us : The fickleness of a Husband may be endured ; but to feel ourselves lessened in our own eyes, as well as in those of the world, — such an humiliation is intolerable. Is a Wife to be indiscreet, because her Husband does not behave to her in the manner she wishes? No, surely. — Mr. *Astell's* inconstancy, my Dear, would give me no uneasiness, if he did not oblige me to keep improper company : Besides, while *you* was with me, Lady *Freelove* could not be quite so teasing ; you kindly shared her impertinence, and considerably relieved me ; but in *your* absence I am left entirely to her mercy ; for Mrs. *Oswald* is, by some means or other, always engaged. She spends a great deal

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deal of her time quite alone, and yet there is no woman more formed to please, or more capable of entertaining, by her conversation. Sir *William Frampton* thinks her extremely conversible, and would be as glad to enjoy a little more of her society, as I should be, but she puts us both off with so much good humour, that we cannot possibly quarrel with her, though we are both half angry with her, he as her Lover, and I as her Friend; yet I think *I* have most reason to complain, as no woman is obliged to like a man whether she will or no. Sir *William* is, undoubtedly, a very agreeable man, but if *she* cannot think him so, she will be highly censurable if she consents to be married to him: As she has been once married against her inclination, it is time she should now please herself. Mr. *Byron* and I have
a great:

a great deal of conversation upon this subject. He says, that he would not marry the finest woman in the world, if he did not love her ; and if she had not sufficiently convinced him, by her behaviour, that she loved *him* to an extravagant degree. He also declares, that he shall require the most indisputable signs of tenderness in the woman whom he chuses for his Wife, before his marriage, as a disappointment afterwards would be insupportable. You see, therefore, my dear *Marianne*, what will be expected from you, by this agreeable man, if you pretend to his heart.

IN CONTINUATION.

I was prevented from finishing my letter, by Mr. *Byron*, who came into my dressing-room to beg he may have the pleasure of my company in his

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his post-chaise to-morrow, when we set out to take a view of a fine Cascade, about two miles off. I hesitated a moment concerning the propriety of appearing always with the same person; but upon his looking very serious, and on his repeating his intreaties, I consented, believing that he only wished for an opportunity to renew his conversation with regard to *you*, my Dear; which must always give pleasure to

Your sincere,

and very affectionate Friend;

MARIA ASTELL.

LET-

LETTER V.

Col. FRAMPTON to JOHN FRAMPTON, *Esq*; at Paris.

INDEED, my dear *Jack*, I cannot possibly think of taking your advice: I cannot, in *my* situation, think of asking Mrs. *Oswald* the question which lies nearest my heart, nor of quartering myself, to talk like a soldier, on her jointure. You tell me, that Love excuses every thing, and that in case of a deficiency in point of Fortune, Inclination will supply it. But I shall discover very little affection for her, I imagine, if I make proposals which must glaringly appear interested ones. I am so fearful, indeed, of encouraging her to suspect my passion for her, that I
 behave

behave with a reserve and a restraint, which are quite painful to me. My behaviour is certainly very particular, and I sometimes fancy it is not pleasing to her. It is no easy matter for me, who feel the full force of her attractions, to conduct myself, in every shape, with the strictest propriety: Another man, altogether indifferent about her, would not find his task half so difficult. Besides, while *one* Brother makes an open avowal of his passion, can *another*, without revolting against justice, endeavour to supplant him? Sir *William* has behaved in the most friendly manner to me; I cannot, therefore, attempt to deprive him of the only woman whom he admires.— Were I, indeed, to make any efforts of that kind, they would be most probably unsuccessful. Why should I imagine that Mrs. *Oswald* would listen

listen to *me* rather than to Sir *William*? *He* is every way formed to please, and *she* has doubtless a susceptible heart; and though she refuses to comply with his wishes at present, she may not really be so averse to him as he supposes her to be. If *I*, who am exceedingly enamoured with her person and manners, *appear* so cold, so insensible to her charms; *she*, as a woman, may, with still greater propriety, conceal her sensations. She may think it indelicate to discover her feelings in the way which most Lovers wish to have their Mistresses express them --- I have, therefore, a glimmering of hope; and I would leave *Astell-Place* were I not detained by an unaccountable desire to reside here, though my residence is attended with many disquietudes. — What strange, inconsistent

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sistent creatures we are? — How different do *I* appear from what I actually am? Without the least duplicity, however, I can subscribe myself,

Your very affectionate Brother,

H. FRAMPTON.

LET-

L E T T E R VI.

Miss HALES to Mrs. ASTELL.

YOUR last letter, my dear *Maria*, has taught me two things of which I was ignorant before. In the first place, I find I have been to blame, by discovering a partiality for Mr. *Byron*, even to *you*. In the *second*, you have made me see, though quite undesignedly, I believe, that he is extremely attached to *you*, and that you are, by no means, so indifferent about him, as you imagine you are. But whatever you may think of him yourself, forget, I beseech you, that *I* ever preferred him to any other man. I have long been of opinion, that you are the only woman in the world suitable to his taste. He is perfectly convinced of your suitableness to him; but as you are married,

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married, my dear *Maria*, and are not, I am willing to believe, inclined to give improper encouragement to any man, he cannot reasonably hope to be connected with you in the manner he wishes.—*I have* had, I confess, in consequence of *your* situation, and *his* behaviour to me, the weakness to imagine, that he looked upon your friend with partial eyes; I have now found out my mistake: I ought to have considered that your superiority, in every respect, could not but determine his choice entirely in *your* favour; though it is a choice which he cannot prudently declare. Yet since *I* am acquainted with it, I am too much of his own way of thinking, to wish to be united to a person who does not prefer me to all the world. Do not call me proud, *Maria*; but I must insist upon the whole heart of the man to whom

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whom I give my hand; and as Mr. *Byron's* heart is, unquestionably, engaged, I shall look upon him only as the Lover of my Friend: Pardon me for adding, that if *she* is as sensible of *his* perfections as *he* is of *hers*, she may be thrown, perhaps, into dangerous situations, though I have too high an opinion of her discretion, to believe that she will ever plunge herself into any injurious to her honour, by an attachment, which, while it is agreeable to her inclination, is condemned by her reason.

As to Lady *Freelove*, I consider her, my dear Mrs. *Astell*, as a woman totally unworthy of your intimacy; and as you have a very nice part to act, you are hardly safe with such a woman, as a mere acquaintance; at the time *Husbands* are disposed to vindicate the
manners

manners of such Women by their behaviour to them, they are, particularly, capable of doing a great deal of mischief. As you are thus circumstanced, you cannot do better, I believe, than to shun Lady *Freelove* as much as possible, without offending her, and to treat her with a reserve sufficiently veiled by politeness not to be observed by her. You are delicately situated, but you cannot, I dare say, want any assistance from

Your ever affectionate,

MARIANNE HALES.

P. S. I think I can guess at the cause of Mrs. *Oswald's* fondness for retirement; but I may be mistaken.

LET-

L E T T E R VII.

Mrs. ASTELL to Miss HALES.

I Thank my dear *Marianne* for her kind Letter, though it has much pained me to find that I have deceived myself; but yet the superior penetration of my Friend may prove extremely serviceable to me. As to Mr. *Byron's* sentiments concerning me, I will not pretend to determine about them; I only know that he has appeared to me in---I am afraid---too agreeable a light. My utmost endeavours, therefore, shall be exerted, to suppress every improper sensation in his favour, and to conceal even those which I may be allowed to discover. Yet it is impossible to see so many attractions, so much assiduity,

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without

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without feeling *some* emotions, which I wish never to feel, as you have convinced me that they cannot be prudently indulged.

Lord and Lady *Freelove* give me more trouble than ever. How easily, my Dear, are we disgusted at the importunities of the man whom we detest! How criminal is it to be charmed with the attentions of the man with whom we cannot help being pleased! — Not that *Byron* has ever mentioned a syllable with which I could justly be offended; but — what shall I say? Shall I confess a weakness which I ought, perhaps, to conceal even from you? — Yes, I will communicate to my dear *Marianne* every secret of my heart. I am afraid I should not be sorry if he *bad*. — I hope to atone for this confession, by promising to do all in

in my power to conquer a prepossession not to be admitted in *my* situation ; a prepossession which I cannot, I fear, indulge, without being guilty of a criminal proceeding. I flatter myself, that I shall never mention Mr. *Astell's* infidelities, in order to justify any deviations, on my side, from the paths of Virtue. I once fondly imagined, that he had entirely broke off his connection with Lady *Freelove*, but I find I am mistaken. I am sorry for it. One has more hopes, I think, of that man's reformation, who is continually changing his object, than of *his* who is firmly attached to a particular woman. However, I am quite at a loss to know what is for the best ; of this I am sure, I am very unhappy ; yet I am ever

Yours most affectionately,

M. ASTELL.

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P. S. Mr. *Astell* has suddenly taken it into his head to go to Town, on purpose to see the Fire-works at *Ranelagh*: Every body but Mr. *Byron* and I are against the journey. Do not imagine now, my dear *Marianne*, that I am against it merely because *he* is. I really prefer the country, at this delightful season of the year, to the finest amusements which *London*, or any of its *environs*, can produce. Can I help a similitude of Taste?

LET-

LETTER VIII.

Mr. BYRON to Sir GEORGE GRAY.

NEVER was there so excellent a Wife as Mrs. *Astell*—so much the worse for her poor devil of a Lover, who despairs of shaking the fidelity which she seems determined to preserve to her Husband. Yet, though I have no hopes, I do not find my inclination diminish; how should it, when the lovely object of my passion appears, every day, more and more amiable? That very reserve, of which I complain, increases both my affection and my esteem; I die to acquaint her with my passion for her, but as I am sure she would not listen to me upon *that* subject, I never open my lips about it; I am half mad, how-

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ever, to sit by, and tamely see her churlish Husband---who, were he not married to her, would be the first to admire her---treat her with the utmost contempt----with downright brutality.

Lady *Freelove* was here yesterday, and wanted to see Mrs. *Astell's* last new sack, from a mere foolish female---not to say idle---curiosity.

Astell, in a commanding tone, bade her fetch it down. He ought to have dispatched one of the servants upon that errand, but she, very dutifully, obeyed him.

The wretch, observing while she spread her sack out, to shew it to the greater advantage, that her foot---the prettiest in the world---happened, by accident, to touch it, rudely pushed her

her

her almost down, saying, at the same time, What an extravagant toad you are to trample upon your gown!

Dear Mr. *Astell*, cried the sweetly-blushing, trembling creature, looking both abashed and frightened at his violence---dear Mr. *Astell*, I am very sorry, but it was quite an accident.

D---n your accidents, answered he, furiously;---but I suppose you think you cannot confound your cloaths fast enough.

She made no reply, but turned away her head to conceal her tears. I asked him how he could treat such an amiable, gentle creature so roughly?

Gentle, do you call her? replied he; aye, they all appear gentle till they see a clever opportunity to be other-

wife, and then they are ready enough to shew their ill humours.

I could have caned the Rascal, with all my soul, for my breath was absolutely thrown away upon him; there is no reasoning with such a Fellow, who scarcely understands the meaning of the word. The malicious devil, *Freelove*, had a sneering laugh upon her face, which made even her fine features look forbidding. I wonder why a woman so sensible, and so capable of giving pleasure, will venture to render herself ugly, in order to enjoy a mean triumph over so lovely, so innocent, so excellent a woman as *Mrs. Astell*, who is, however, on account of her shining Virtues, not to be injured by her absurd Ridicule; for Ridicule must always lose its force, when

when it is levelled at a deserving object.

Hurrying out of the room after the dear injured woman, I stopped her, took the sack from her with one hand, and, while I called her own servant, ventured to press her to my bosom with the other, in the most affectionate manner, by way of letting her see how sincerely I was affected by the ill treatment she had received, and how exceedingly I pitied her.

A rosy blush covered her charming face and neck, while she gently disengaged herself from my arms.

On the appearance of Mrs. Fletcher, a sigh was her only reply; but whether that sigh arose from her feeling any pleasure from the warmth of my sympathetic behaviour, or whether it

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was occasioned by her reflections upon the brutality of her Husband's carriage, I dare not pronounce. To her Love I do not pretend to aspire at present; her Friendship I ardently covet, as the choicest gift Fortune has in store for me; a gift which I would purchase with my life. She appears to be touched with my attentions, yet she is more reserved, and more shy of me than usual; however, I cannot help discovering---let her or *Astell* think as they please---I cannot help discovering the sensations I feel at his behaviour to her, and at her sufferings---if she really *does* suffer, from his want of love for her, and from the preference which he gives to other women. From his want of Love, indeed, I do not believe that her sufferings can be very great; his mortifying neglect may pique her Vanity, and wound

wound her Pride, but I am not of opinion, that she feels the slightest Inclination for him.

What is Life without Love? Without that tender union of hearts, which is accompanied with thrilling transports never to be described? And must this fine creature, whose sensibility is so delightfully expressed in every glance of her sentimental eyes, in every feature of her lovely face, replete at once with beauty and with benevolence, and glowing always at the sight of me, as if her blushes were intended to apologize for the discovery of emotions, which she --- vainly striving to resist the impulses of Nature --- wishes to conceal. Must this fine creature, with all her loveliness, all her excellences, pine away the best part of her life, when tides of

youthful blood swell her azure veins, and when the animating voice of Pleasure urges her to enjoy every moment. Forbid it, Nature! and forbid it, Love!---She may, perhaps, after all, feel tender sensations in *my* favour, but think it proper most carefully to endeavour to hide them from me. Her Discretion is certainly equal to her Beauty. I admire her the more, for taking so much pains to render herself worthy of my esteem: Yet I should *love* her better, would she now and then be guilty of those enchanting imprudences, which are stronger proofs of a reciprocal passion than the most ample confessions, stronger than all the protestations in the universe. A look, a word, a sigh, a returned pressure of hand, are more satisfactory than all the vows and promises upon earth.---Whether I shall
ever

ever be so happy as to find Mrs. *Astell* giving me such signs, such proofs, I cannot say---I rather think I shall never taste so much felicity, for she appears more indifferent than ever: Yet I do assure you, I would not stay here a moment longer, but upon her account. Were she left alone in the power of this fellow, the consequences resulting from his ill usage might be fatal. He has proposed going to town to-morrow, in order to be at *Ranelagh* in the evening. I hate *London* at this time of year, but I *must* follow Mrs. *Astell*, on purpose to watch over her, like her Guardian Angel. Possibly we may meet; till then

Adieu.

L E T-

L E T T E R IX.

From the Same to the Same.

I Called upon you twice, but you was not to be seen—I should have been, indeed, a very dull companion *had* I found you at home. There is nothing which puts a man of any sensibility out of humour so soon, and so completely, as the indifference of the woman whom he loves. Mrs. *Astell* has discovered *her* indifference to a degree, which has deprived me of all my patience.

We went to town: *Astell* drove Lady *Freelove* in his phaëton, and I intreated Mrs. *Astell* to let me have a seat by her in my post-chaise; but she rejected both me and my carriage into the bargain: And though Mrs.
Oswald,

Oswald, from an uncommon piece of condescension, had agreed to go with Sir *William Frampton*, this capricious woman ordered her own post-coach, and obliged the Baronet and the Lady to be of her party. *Frampton* could have killed her, I verily believe; he looked at her — her Husband himself could not have looked at her with a more sour face. Mrs. *Oswald's* forehead was not smooth the whole day: She only ceased to frown when Sir *William* told the Colonel, who rode *his* horse, that he would relieve him at the next stage but one.

On *Harry's* coming into the coach — after many refusals — she gave him a smile — Had I received such a smile from Mrs. *Astell*, I should have been half distracted with joy, so extremely full

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full of meaning was it — A fellow of the least penetration might have put a thousand constructions upon it.

Well, when we came to *Ranelagh*, every man took the Lady whom he chose under his protection. I was, you may be sure, going to seize Mrs. *Astell*. She shrunk from me like the sensitive plant, and gave her hand immediately to Colonel *Frampton*. Mrs. *Oswald* frowned again, in a manner sufficient to strike us all dead, if her frowns had been mortal; but we survived only to torment each other for the remainder of the evening. — I swear I have racked my imagination to find out the meaning of this behaviour of Mrs. *Astell's*: I never before observed in her the slightest partiality towards *Harry Frampton*: But it was so plain, so very

very evident, that he was the man of her choice, and he seemed so satisfied, so pleased:—Who, indeed, would not upon such an occasion?—that I must have been greatly mistaken in them both.—I shall not interrupt them, therefore, but leave them to the enjoyment of each other, though, I confess, my disappointment is of the most mortifying nature. Those people, who think themselves better than their neighbours, will say, that I am rightly served, for having endeavoured to corrupt another man's Wife.—But I had really no such design. I could never love a woman who would be false to her Husband in essential points: Yet as it is impossible for Mrs. *Astell*, with *her* delicacy, to feel any tenderness for *her* brute, why may she not be allowed to encourage tender sentiments in

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in favour of a man, who, instead of abusing her goodness, would adore her for the very virtues which oppose his happiness? But then, she must discover an esteem, a friendship for him, superior to what she had ever felt for any other person; I will not except even a female Friend, who may, if the attachment be a strong one, deprive a man of a great deal of a Mistress's company, and; perhaps, of a considerable share of her heart. — No, the Woman whom I love must be mine alone; that is, she must prefer *me* to every other person — Now I do not find myself in this situation with Mrs. *Astell* — You will laugh at me, I know, but I cannot help telling you, that I am horridly piqued by this sudden change in her behaviour; so piqued, that I had a great mind not to return with them to *L—shire*:
Vain,

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Vain, however, are the resolutions of a man in love. One civil word fixed me as irrevocably her's, as if she had declared that I was her sole Favourite; and yet, after that one word, which had placed me again in the post-coach, she took no more notice of me than if she had never seen me in her life. Possibly she was disconcerted at *Astell's* foolery with Lady *Freelove*, who forced themselves among us. — Her Ladyship having taken a sudden dislike to the phaëton, which Mrs. *Oswald*, not unwillingly I thought, mounted, when she had prevailed on the Colonel to drive her, declaring loudly against Sir *William's* holding the reins, as he would not, she was sure, attend properly to the horses. Whether she designed by that declaration to affront the Baronet, or to compliment the
Colonel,

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Colonel, I cannot determine, but neither of them appeared to be pleased with *her* speech, or with *his own* situation. They were all cursedly out of humour, except the fools before-mentioned, and so we did nothing but squint at, and quarrel with one another. And thus ends the journey to *London*; Thus, too, ends this Letter from

Yours, as usual,

E. B.

L E T-

LETTER X.

Miss Hales to Mrs. Oswald.

YOU were so very obliging, dear Mrs. Oswald, when I left *Astell-Place*, as to tell me, that you should be glad to receive a line from me when I had nothing else to do: I am too sensible of my inability to entertain you with my pen; I will, however, do my best to make my correspondence not disagreeable to you. This Letter, indeed, is written merely out of friendship to Mrs. *Astell*, who complains exceedingly of my having left her, as she is, in consequence of my departure, exposed to the company of a neighbour of her's, whom she wishes to avoid as much as possible,

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sible, without infringing the rules prescribed by politeness, or obliged to be left frequently without any female companion, with her Husband's friends and acquaintance. She is, therefore, I think, as she is a very pretty woman, disagreeably circumstanced. Aware, it is true, of her hazardous situation, she is more upon her guard than many women would be, situated like *her*; yet how often have the most prudent women found themselves entangled in difficulties of the most trying kind? I have heard men of no small penetration say, that an amiable woman, married in the prime of life to a man who discovers little regard for her, and surrounded by a number of agreeable flatterers, is in a very dangerous condition. Is it not to be feared,

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feared, that, among Mrs. *Astell's* numerous admirers, *one* of them may make too deep an impression upon her heart, already, perhaps, too much softened in his favour by the cutting neglect and cruel indifference of her every way unsuitable Husband.

Our valuable young Friend is, I believe, thoroughly discreet, yet it is more for her honour, as well as for her security, to be under the inspection of a sensible and affectionate Friend, who would carefully watch over her conduct. — Be you that Friend, Madam, as you are, from the strength of your understanding, and from the benevolence of your disposition, highly qualified for so laudable an employment, and give me the charming satisfaction to hear from my amiable
Maria,

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Maria, that you are as willing to supply, as you are capable of supplying, the place of her and your

Affectionate Friend,

MARIANNE HALES.

L E T.

LETTER XL.

Mrs. OSWALD to Miss HALES.

WHAT a pretty Address, my dear Miss *Hales*, have I received from you! But to how improper a person you have addressed yourself, *I* only, perhaps, can inform you. Your Friendship for our dear Mrs. *Astell* is so pure, so sincere, so uncommon, that it not only merits numberless encomiums, but an ample confession from me of all my foibles. The confession of them will, at once, convince you, that I am the last person to be singled out as a Monitress to a woman, whose discretion has never been questioned; it will serve, also, I hope, to render you desirous

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of favouring *Henrietta* with your advice, as she stands infinitely more in need of it than our dear *Maria*. I blush not indeed to say, that Mr. — (I cannot bring myself to write his name) — is the cause of my deviation from that prudence, which you so politely ascribe to me; for had I not imagined that he was particularly deserving of my attention, I should not, I think, my dear Miss *Hales*, have distinguished him; yet I blush — (perhaps from pride, tho' my blushes arise, I flatter myself, rather from a delicacy of feeling, without which no woman can be, in *my* opinion, amiable,) I blush to be forced, in a manner, to own, that this man engrosses my thoughts, and takes up too much of my time to permit me to superintend the actions of other people. Besides, how
can

can I, with any sort of decency, scrutinize very strictly into the failings of my acquaintance, when I am sensible that I have more of my own than I know how to correct? Mrs. *Astell*, from the observations which I have made on her behaviour, has no faults; if she *has* any, she conceals them with an admirable dexterity. She is a little spiteful, however, by appearing so faultless a character. As she excels so many of her Friends in person and accomplishments, she ought to give them *some* consolation for their deficiencies, by discovering a few imperfections. She would certainly have as good an excuse ready as any wife ever had, should she even violate her marriage vows; and she almost deserves the treatment which

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she receives from her Husband, for not running away from him. — Seriously, however, I envy Mrs. *Astell* more than any Woman in the world; yet if I can be of the slightest service to *her*, and if *you* will promise me the continuance of your correspondence, you may freely command

Your very affectionate Friend,

and humble Servant,

HENRIETTA OSWALD.

P. S. I dare believe that, after what I have said, my dear *Marianne* will conclude it most discreet, as well as most friendly,

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ly, to conceal the weakness of Mrs. Oswald, and look upon it merely as the folly of *Henrietta*. Once more

Adieu.

L E T T E R XII.

Mr. BYRON to Sir GEORGE GRAY.

WE have got a new Visitor here, with whom I have endeavoured to make a diversion; a wild, thoughtless, country Girl, handsome, and not void of sense; but she is rather too *boydenish*: She is one of those Females who assume a right to say and do what they please, with a kind of unblushing *naïveté*, for which you cannot possibly correct them, though you are frequently obliged to wish that they did not deserve to be corrected.

Miss *Burrell* is one of these beings: With excessive spirits, with no ill intentions, and with an extreme want
of

of delicacy, she commits innumerable blunders, by which she not only appears embarrassed herself, but makes her Friends disconcerted on her account. This very Girl has thought proper to distinguish *me*---no great proof of her wisdom, you will say. There is, however, *George*, something strangely flattering in the attentions of a fine Woman, and *Kitty Burrell* must, certainly, be called a fine one: Yet when she sits by Mrs. *Astell*, I cannot forbear making comparisons not much to her advantage. Her Brother came with her--- he is a handsome fellow, and discovers his taste by attaching himself to Mrs. *Astell*.--- They are distantly related to *Astell*, who rudely romps with his fair Cousin in a manner which would put any other Woman out of countenance, but *she* seems to be troubled with no deli-

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cate qualms: Like a true Hoyden, she flies at him again, and tries to conquer him by downright strength of limbs. Such a Girl will never do for *me*, George---she is only fit to live in the place in which she was bred, and to figure at a *smock race*---Yes---I think she would, under *Astley's* direction, shine in the *equestrian* way. I really believe she would be more delighted with her feats of horsemanship, if a stout healthy young fellow was ready to catch her in his arms when she had performed her masculine activities, than with any of those elegant amusements with which Women of Taste and Sentiment fill up their vacant hours.

Mrs. *Astell*---my patience was severely tried---Mrs. *Astell* was yesterday *drawing* in her dressing-room;

Mrs.

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Mrs. *Oswald* sat working at her Tam-bour by her side, and I read the Spirit of Contradiction, an ingenious dramatic piece, said to be wrote by the late Mr. *Rich*. The door suddenly was opened, and in flew *Kitty* after her *Astell*.

Help, help, Mr. *Byron*, cried the former, laying her head upon my shoulders, (and pressing it, by the way, at the same time, not very slightly) I have gathered the sweetest Moss Rose, and he *will* take it from me, though I have fastened it in my bosom, in order to save it from his impertinent fingers.

Really, answered I, with great coolness, and not even looking at her, you could not have put it in a place more inviting, but I suppose you planted it there on purpose; I would ad-

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vise him, therefore, not to leave you till he gets possession of it.

Hear the Wretch, replied she, giving me another violent pinch---you are worse than *be*.

Come, come, *Kitty*, said *Astell*, roughly pulling her to him, don't be a fool: *Byron* is in the right, Women only resist to sharpen our appetite.

Let me alone, Mr. *Astell*---you are an absolute bear.

The fitter to manage *you*, then, said he, taking her in his arms, and throwing her upon a sofa, just by the table, near which his lovely Wife sat innocently amusing herself, and improving her elegant taste in drawing---By his boisterous behaviour he overturned the table, and threw every thing upon it to the floor.

On

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On her going to take up her drawings, and to open her ruby lips, the brute exclaimed, D---n your papers! how you have littered the house with your trumpery!

Dear Mr. *Astell*, replied she, stooping to pick them off the floor---To give her still more trouble, he kicked them about with his foot. While he was so employed, he discovered a man's head prettily touched, but whether it was a copy, or from her own fancy, I could not see, as she hastily endeavoured to hide it, colouring like scarlet.

So, said *Astell*, with a sneer, that is one of your Fellows, I suppose--- Well, Madam, while you amuse yourself with the exercise of your ideas only, I must have more substantial pleasure. Come, *Kitty*---turning to

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Miss *Burrell*, who had quitted the sofa, to which he carried her, and was leaning upon my shoulder, looking sometimes over my book, but oftener, with much earnestness in my face---

Let me alone, Mr. *Astell*, said she; I will stay here.

Determining, however, not to let her stay in the room, at least in that attitude, I threw her abruptly from me, and flew to assist Mrs. *Astell*, in gathering up her Drawings, which I wanted to examine indeed, especially the little Portrait, as the face appeared, at the distance I had seen it, a genteel one, and delicately drawn. From her confusion, indeed, and from her precipitation to conceal it, I fancied, with *Astell*, that it was the picture of her favourite Admirer. I was just wild.

wild to get a nearer view of it. Luckily for me, there was suddenly a brisk air, which blew the Drawings into an adjoining room, the door of it being open.

We all ran in. Hurrying to seize the Portrait, which she so much wished to conceal, and which her good Genius, in the form of a Zephir, wafted both from her Husband and from me, Mrs. *Astell* fell down, and struck her head against a chair.

Touched with her accident, I raised her in my arms. While I conducted her to a chair, enquiring where she was hurt, *Astell* cried, with a sneer, Look at my Wife and *Byron*.

At that moment she withdrew her hand from mine, quite frightened at his ridiculous behaviour, but still looked about

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about anxiously in search of her Drawing. Mrs. *Oswald* caught it up, and, with a very significant glance, put it into her pocket.

As soon as Mrs. *Astell* was recovered, and when her Husband, with his Romp, had left the room, I sat down by Mrs. *Oswald*, and begged her to favour me with a sight of the Miniature in her pocket, as it seemed to be executed in an admirable manner by her Fair Friend.

She positively refused to gratify my curiosity, telling me at the same time, with much vivacity, that it was the picture of her favourite Man, which Mrs. *Astell* had, at her request, drawn for her, and that nobody should see it but herself.

Mrs. *Astell* then, with a look at once expressive of bashfulness and gratitude,

itude, pressed her hand, by way of thanking her for having assisted her in the concealment of her picture from *my eyes*: from the eyes of every body, indeed, except their own; I am, therefore, still in the dark. They have raised my curiosity to an unusual pitch, and I must procure the gratification of it in some shape or other--- But there is such a juggling connection between these two women, that I am very much afraid I shall never come to the bottom of this mystical affair.

To administer *some* comfort to myself, under my disappointments, I turn my attention towards Miss *Burrell*: I amuse myself now and then with her, to while away the time, and to hinder myself from thinking seriously upon what gives me a great deal of anxiety; for I will confess to you,
that

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that I feel more for Mrs. *Astell* than I can well describe; and when I consider how little reason I have to expect to see her in happier circumstances, I am extremely distressed. I, therefore, trifle away my hours with this Girl, to throw all disagreeable reflections out of my head. I take care, however, to avoid giving her any serious encouragement; for I am of opinion, that it is full as infamous to make an unjust seizure of a Woman's Heart, as to make an unfair attack upon her Person. But I believe I shall have nothing to apprehend from my gallantry with *Kitty*. She seems to have very little Mind: She is a mere corporeal creature, with no sentiments at all. I have often, in a ruminating humour, wondered to what amusements your female voluptuaries have recourse,

recourse, when they are no longer able to enjoy the pleasures of sensuality. Women of delicate dispositions can entertain themselves at every stage of life; but those who have no relish for any joys but *personal* ones, are truly to be pitied: They are to be pitied, when they are in the full possession of their personal powers: When they have out-lived those powers, they are the greatest objects of compassion imaginable. To be married to a Woman of such a complexion---There's horror in the thought!

Whenever I reflect on such characters, how much do my admiration of, and esteem for Mrs. *Astell* increase! Yet I may, perhaps, be deceived even in *her*. This Drawing is, undoubtedly, the resemblance of a man whom she beholds with partial eyes: He is a handsome

handsome fellow, I will venture to say, from the glimpse I had of his penciled face---She would hardly have spent so much of her time, she would hardly have taken so much pains, about a man to whom she is indifferent. I have long thought she had a favourite concealed, and now I have no doubts---but still I want to know who he is---It is no business of mine, indeed, to be inquisitive upon this occasion, yet, I confess, I am weak enough to be both out of humour, and out of spirits about it. I sometimes think I will try to sift the secret out of Mrs. *Oswald*: She, certainly, is acquainted with every thing concerning it, by being so ready to hurry it out of every body's sight, though I suppose she will make no discoveries. She stands exactly in the place of Miss *Hales*. These Women
always

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always help each other out upon any emergencies, but they give us up immediately, when they find we can be no longer serviceable to them.

Yours, &c.

E. B.

L E T.

L E T T E R XIII.

Mrs. ASTELL to Miss HALES.

I Had a very narrow escape, yesterday, on the point of being exposed, of being made as contemptible, or ridiculous as possible. I have hardly recovered my spirits yet---and all through my own excessive indiscretion---I deserved, indeed, all the painful sensations which I endured---If *Mrs. Oswald* had not behaved in the most friendly manner imaginable, I do not know what would have become of me---I believe, my dear *Marianne*, I am indebted to you for her friendliness. She speaks highly of *you*; she tells me that you and she are to correspond, and that you know her most secret thoughts.---I wish

wish you knew mine ; but, indeed, my Dear, I am ashamed to tell you : I cannot frame any apology for what I have done ; my folly is beyond expression --- My intentions, however, I can truly say, were not criminal. Wishing to improve myself in my Drawing, by copying Portraits after Nature, I thought it necessary to chuse one of her most finished productions. I accordingly fixed upon a *living Picture*, with a lively, clear Complexion, animated with a pair of the finest dark Eyes in the world, which received new brilliancy from the expression beaming in them ; with an agreeable Mouth, charming Teeth, and the most beautiful Hair to be conceived. Struck with this *living Picture*, I was, insensibly, tempted *to draw* from it. --- However, conscious as I am of the purity of my intentions,
my

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my little Performance shall be carefully concealed for the present.

When I had finished my Portrait, I kept it, for very proper reasons, under my other papers. I had once, indeed, resolved to destroy it, but foolishly imagining that the execution of it was in a manner superior to the other attempts of my pencil, I was prompted to preserve it.

I was sketching out some Flowers ; Mrs. *Oswald* sat by me, working her gown ; Mr. *Byron* read to us.---On a sudden, Mr. *Astell* and Miss *Burrell* rushed into the room, and overturned my papers. The wind being high, they were dispersed, and the very Drawing, which I so earnestly wished to hide from every eye, was exhibited, to my no small confusion. Every body saw it, but nobody could reach

reach it, except Mr. *Astell*: Luckily, however, for me, just when he came near it, Mrs. *Oswald* kindly interposed, snatched it up, and put it into her pocket: By *her* friendship and address, therefore, I was saved from a great deal of raillery, which might, probably, have been attended with injurious suspicions; suspicions which I never shall, I hope, deserve. I shall always love Mrs. *Oswald* as much as I condemn myself, and will instantly get rid of a *Drawing*, which I ought not, I am thoroughly sensible, to have in my possession. Yet there is one thing which gives me not a little disquiet. This untoward accident has, I am afraid, induced Mrs. *Oswald* to think oddly of me: But I flatter myself, that I shall, by keeping a strict watch over my conduct for the future, stifle every rising folly

folly in my mind, that I may not be injured by its growth.---It is sometimes our duty, *Marianne*, to divest ourselves of very pleasing ideas; but it cannot be agreeable to us to banish such ideas, and to substitute others in their room, directly opposite to them. In spite of all our precautions, Human Nature is extremely apt to revolt against Human Reason. By reflecting, however, upon what we ought to do, and upon the unhappiness which never fails to poison the peace of those who are conscious of having acted wrong, we may be rendered still more sensible of the value of Discretion.---It is in every body's power to endeavour to act right.

Mr. *Astell* raillied me in *his* rude way, about what he discovered, but,
most

most fortunately, he did not see the Portrait near enough to be able to form any judgment about it. I would not, for the world, have him entertain a slight opinion of me, as all my hopes of his being one day reclaimed, depend upon his returning Affection. I once fondly imagined that I enjoyed his Affection, tho' it was of a short duration, but were it even lost for ever, ought I not to consider my Reputation, and my Peace, as infinitely dearer to me? Were I capable of being guilty of a criminal action, and were it possible for me to conceal it from all the world, I should, from the very consciousness of having lost that innocence which I at present enjoy, feel more anguish than Mr. *Astell's* worst usage can make me endure. — To be strictly virtuous, my dear Miss *Hales*, a Wo-

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man should not have the slightest inclination to deviate from the paths of Prudence ; and I can, with the greatest truth affirm, that I never was in the least inclined to be indiscreet : Yet it is impossible to be too circumspect. What appears to be nothing but Folly sometimes rises into Vice before we are aware.—I am afraid, then, of myself, and will not partake of amusements which may, perhaps, lead to consequences not to be defended, or give the least room for suspicions in the highest degree injurious, because totally unmerited.—How many such suspicions would the discovery of the Drawing above-mentioned have occasioned, known to have been executed by *my* hand? How many idle reflections and remarks?—Let me, therefore, be thankful for my preservation, from the empty and unjust censures

censures of those who are not acquainted with the real springs of my actions, and take care, for the future, to do nothing that may furnish any body with the slightest pretence to question the propriety of my conduct.

Mr. *Byron* has been extremely inquisitive about this affair; but Mrs. *Oswald* and I have, both, refused to gratify his curiosity.

As to Mr. *Astell*, I really believe he is troubled with no suspicions concerning it; I am, consequently, very easy: I shall, however, take the first opportunity to put it out of my power to suffer any anxiety from an incident of no seeming importance. I am particularly pleased to find Mrs. *Oswald* shew so much regard for me.

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It is the only consolation I feel in
the absence of my dear *Marianne*.

I am, my valuable Friend,

Yours most affectionately,

MARIA ASTELL.

LET.

L E T T E R XIV.

From the Same to the Same.

IT is a strange thing that some people cannot amuse themselves according to their own taste, without insisting upon the concurrence of others, with *their* particular inclinations.

Lord *Freelove* has got a bad fever; it has fallen upon his nerves, and he is thought to be in a dangerous way: My Lady's spirits have been so much lowered, by sometimes confining herself, through necessity, with him, that she is the most restless Woman imaginable. She called upon me, yesterday, and complained of her ex-

cessive languor, for want of a change in her amusements.—I was to have gone to *Brightelmstone*, continued she, to bathe in the sea, but though I can be of no use to my Lord, and though we both hate each other, the impertinent world would, I suppose, talk about me, were I to leave him while he complained of being out of order. For my part, I cannot conform to every body's ridiculous fancies: I have been sufficiently hurt in my health and my spirits, by the attention which my Lord absurdly requires from me, tho' it does him no kind of good. Now as I must not leave this spot, I have been looking out for some other to answer my purpose for the present, and have discovered the snuggest little rivulet in the Park, in which we can bathe vastly well. I am come, therefore,

to

to desire your company in the water with me.

I gave her, you may be sure, immediately, a positive refusal. Mrs. *Oswald*, who sat by, laughed exceedingly at the idea of a snug rivulet, and asked her Ladyship what the impertinent world would say about such a bathing-place?

Pshaw! never mind her, Mrs. *Astell*, replied she, but go with me in the cool of the evening. You cannot think how excessively refreshing bathing is.

I still refused, but she continued to tease me in so provoking a manner, that I was forced, at last, to be rather more warm about such a trifle than I expected to be, and my warmth drove her away, but she left me with very

strong marks of displeasure in her frowning countenance.

I could not help being a good deal disconcerted at her behaviour: Mrs. *Oswald* endeavoured to railly me out of the embarrassment into which she had thrown me, but I could neither recover my temper, nor my spirits, for a considerable time. Mr. *Byron* also strove, by a variety of methods, to turn my attention to something else; but I could not be chearful. I do not know how it is, I can never feel happy when people are very much displeased with me: Perhaps I dread their resentment; and yet I actually think I suffer more anxiety for having, undesignedly, disgusted those with whom I am acquainted, than many of them would endure upon the same occasion.

Mrs.

Mrs. *Oswald* was very lively about the bathing scheme, till Col. *Framp-ton* came into the room, to tell us that he should leave us the next morning: Then, and not till then, did I discover her prepossession in his favour. She coloured, and turned pale, alternately: She got up, walked to the window, and sat down again. The poor Colonel looked rather in an awkward situation, tho' he strove to conceal his embarrassment as well as he could. I am, by no means, apt to ask Gentlemen to stay with me; but feeling a sort of compassion for our Friend, as well as for the Colonel, I pressed him to give us his company a little longer. Mrs. *Oswald* seconded my request, and in a manner sufficiently persuasive, one would have thought, to exclude a Refusal: Yet a Refusal she was destined to hear from

his lips, and he delivered it in so cool, so forbidding a way, that our dear *Henrietta* was extremely disconcerted. She tried to assume a proper degree of Pride upon the mortifying occasion; but I saw tears tremble in her eyes. The Colonel too saw them, I imagined, for he looked earnestly at her, and changed colour: He then, turning away his face, left the room without speaking a word.

As soon as he was gone she laid her hand on mine, took out her handkerchief, and said, I am very foolish, my dear Mrs. *Astell*, but I believe that Colonel *Frampton* is a Man of Honour, and I hope his general character will apologize for my partiality in his favour.

No apology is wanted, my dear Mrs. *Oswald*, replied I, pressing her hand,

hand, I have as high an opinion of Colonel *Frampton* as you have, or I should not have asked him to stay.

I thank you, answered she, you are a good creature, but there is something so indelicate in appearing to prefer a Man who quite neglects me, that I blame myself exceedingly for my behaviour: Should we not, however, discover a great deal of selfishness, to esteem those only who had a regard for us?

True, said I, but I should not be happy with a Man who had not married me from inclination.

Was you not the Woman of Mr. *Astell's* choice, my Dear, replied she! Pardon my impertinence.

He preferred me, I fancy, to every other Woman at the time he married

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E 6 me;

me ; but, I believe, he gave himself no pleasure by entering into the Marriage State. — Colonel *Frampton* may, possibly, have as little inclination to Matrimony as Mr. *Astell* had, said she — You will laugh at me, perhaps, but I am really of opinion, that no life is so happy as a married one, when the contracted parties are perfectly suitable to each other ; the happiness arising from mutual Love, mutual Esteem, and mutual Confidence, I never was acquainted with. The Man whom my Father chose for me had not one qualification capable of gaining either my Friendship or my Affection. Possess of an uncommon share of sensibility, and wishing to live a rational, domestic life, I have, I will honestly confess, since my acquaintance with Colonel *Frampton*, fixed upon him as the very man qualified

lified for that sort of Friendship, which can alone be productive of Felicity in the Matrimonial State. Yet I, at the same time, perceive, with no small regret, that he behaves to me with a singular indifference, as I am generally reckoned *not* disagreeable, and mistress of a handsome, independent fortune, and as I never heard of his having any attachment. I cannot help preferring him, however, to every other man, nor does Sir *William*, by persisting to follow me, (tho' I perpetually tell him, that he follows me to no purpose,) weaken the impression which his Brother has made on my heart. Now am I not a very silly creature, Mrs. *Astell*, and ought I not to be quite satisfied with *Framp-ton's* coolness to *me*, as he *distinguishes* no other Woman?

I can't

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. I can't tell, replied I, how far you ought to be satisfied about the Colonel's behaviour; nobody, I believe, can govern his inclination in such a manner, as to love and hate whom he pleases; but while we conceal our sentiments, we are, undoubtedly, at liberty to enjoy them, supposing they lead us into no criminal situations.

I am of your mind, replied she, but I am afraid I do not always hide what is so very ready to appear—My partiality for the Colonel is, I imagine, too visible, and yet I shall not wish to divest myself of it, while *his* heart remains disengaged; when once I am, with certainty, informed that he attaches himself to another Woman, I give up all hopes of him, and shall regulate my conduct accordingly.

Thus,

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Thus, my dear *Marianne*, has Mrs. *Oswald* disclosed her secret thoughts; and as she has often told me you are acquainted with them, I may safely communicate her sentiments about Colonel *Frampton*, in her own words. She is a very amiable Woman, and I with the Colonel knew how much he is in her favour; but I am so far of *her* opinion, as to think that a Woman, by speaking first, discovers a want of Delicacy not to be pardoned. There are ways enough to make our inclinations known, without having recourse to any indelicate proceedings: Whether the way, I have schemed, on Mrs. *Oswald's* account, will be successful, I cannot determine.

Mr. *Astell* is just coming up stairs, and so I hasten to conclude —

Yours ever sincerely, M. A.

L E T -

L E T T E R XV.

Mr. BYRON to Sir GEORGE GRAY.

WAS there ever such a wretch as this *Astell*, so lost not only to the tenderness and fidelity which he owes to this charming creature; but to every degree of decency?—You will scarce give me credit for my intelligence, but I assure you, that you may depend upon the truth of the following particulars relating to him.

While I was sitting in a room adjoining to that in which the much injured, amiable Wife sat writing, to Miss *Hales*, I suppose, *Astell* stumped up stairs, and, with a thundering voice, said, What is the reason, Madam, that you have affronted Lady *Freelove* in this gross manner?

Who,

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Who, I, Mr. *Astell*? replied she, in the mildest accents—I do not know what—

You do not know—interrupted he, in a still more furious key—'Tis false.—'tis a d—'d lie—but, by H—n, you shall be taught better, for, by the eternal God I swear, I will not suffer her to be insulted in *my* house, nor by *you*, any where; you, who are not to be put a single moment in competition with her; *you*, a poor sneaking, puling, insinuating, hypocritical devil.

Dear Mr. *Astell*, cried she, trembling, do not be angry—Pray do not be angry with me, without telling me what fault I have committed; I am not conscious of having said or done any thing, designedly, to offend Lady *Freelove*.—

No to be sure, answered he, you are always so soft, so decent, and so—

D—n

D—n your affectation; but I will make you repent of it.

He then raised his voice, and poured out such a volley of fresh oaths, and the most horrid ones imaginable, that I determined to interpose, lest he should carry his threats into execution, and actually have struck the poor distressed creature. — If he *had* struck her *before me*, I believe I should have laid him dead at my feet.

Laying my hand on his shoulder, I said, as coolly as I could, though I felt my blood boil at him, What is the matter, *Astell*?

Matter, Sir? replied he, in a surly tone, as if he was, at once, ashamed of having been surprized in such a fury, and angry with me for having given him any interruption — I hope
I may

I may speak to my Wife, without being interrogated by *you*?

Certainly you *may*, and as certainly you *will*, answered I, swallowing my rage, which began to be almost equal to his — but as I would always rather endeavour to compromise disputes between Friends, than to foment them, give me leave to be Moderator between you — What has Mrs. *Astell* done to offend Lady *Freelove*, pray?

Done? replied he — Why she has ridiculed her in the rudest manner ---

For what? 'added I, hastily, willing to hinder his suffering Wife from speaking, lest he should give an ill-natured turn to her words, though I was sure that she would utter none not sufficient to disarm a tiger of his ferocity.

For

For what? thundered he again, Why only because she proposed bathing in the Park, and asked *Maria* to go with her.

Poor *Maria* lifted up her hands and eyes, while I replied for her — I am sure, said I, that Mrs. *Astell* has said nothing which ought to make her Ladyship in the least offended with her; she only refused to join with her in executing the absurdest and most indecent scheme imaginable; a scheme which no Woman of the slightest modesty would have thought of, as it was calculated to expose both her Person and Reputation in the most public manner. If Mrs. *Astell*, therefore, has spoken against Lady *Free-love*'s design, with a warmth sufficient to deter her from the execution of it, she has acted, in my opinion, a very friendly

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friendly part --- No Woman of character or delicacy, *Astell*, continued I, would have made so strange a proposal ---- I never, indeed, thought Lady *Freelove* extremely strict, either about the first or the last, but in this affair she has discovered herself totally regardless of them both.

She is prodigiously obliged to you, *Byron*, replied he, with a sneer, for your favourable sentiments concerning her.

I don't know what you may think, answered I, but I would sooner perish than let *my* Wife wash in a place exposed to every body who happens to pass that way --- I declare I never heard of such proceedings among Women of Character --- Mrs. *Astell's* Delicacy was very justly affronted by Lady *Freelove's* ridiculous request, and
why

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why you, or any other person, should be offended at her not complying with it I cannot conceive; her refusal was, I think, the highest proof she could have given of her discretion.

Undoubtedly, replied he, sneeringly, were it in your power to marry her, you would meet with a d---'d many proofs of her discretion. ---

Of that speech I did not deem it prudent to take any notice, imagining that I had gone far enough in defending Mrs. *Astell's* conduct, and really I was, out of regard for her, unwilling to say another word in her favour, though her Husband certainly deserved very severe chastisement for his brutal behaviour to a Woman who merited the greatest tenderness; I, therefore, retired to the room I had quitted.

As

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As soon as I left them I heard *Astell* abuse his charming Wife in the grossest language, and I actually believe that he made an improper use of his hands, as well as of his tongue, for I thought I heard her endeavour to stifle a groan more than once.

I was then exasperated beyond all patience---Flying back again I saw her face and neck like scarlet; her handkerchief was torn, and blood streamed from her nose---I guessed immediately in what manner she had been treated, and, darting a furious glance at *Astell*, asked the dear Angel the cause of her disorder, ringing the bell, at the same time, for her Woman.

My nose is very apt to bleed, said she, with a look that would have melted your very soul, so exquisitely expressive was it of suffering innocence.

It

It is a d---'d troublesome one, cried he.

I gave him another furious glance, and he walked away. --- When her Woman was gone, I employed all my rhetoric to come at the truth of the affair, in which I had so much interested myself, but the dear injured Excellence would not say a syllable that might occasion reflections on her Husband's character, or on her own --- She laid the blame entirely on a temporary indisposition, and left me to believe what I pleased --- I am as sure he struck her as if I had seen the blow. Does such a cowardly villain deserve so exemplary a Wife? But she is too tame --- Yet if she does not expose him, she must hate him, and her hatred, perhaps, may, in time, operate agreeably to my wishes. Certainly, *George*, there can be no sort of crime
in

in administering Consolation to a Woman, who is tormented by such a devil of a Husband.

IN CONTINUATION.

I met Mrs. *Oswald* soon afterwards, and communicated to her as many of my suspicions as would, I thought, induce her to be attentive to her injured Friend. --- When I leave her --- and I must soon leave her --- what will become of her, in the power of this Monster, without a single creature of either sex to take her part? --- *Astell* must be the most despicable of Men to behave to his amiable Wife in the manner he does --- People may hate each other heartily, and yet keep within the pale of politeness. A distant civility is always best, especially to those for whom we have an

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aversion, because it keeps them from being troublesome. I have known the most inveterate enmities very genteelly kept up between persons of extreme good breeding --- There are people, on the other hand, so ill bred, that they are either kissing or kicking before your face. I do not rank *Astell* among the former, or the latter : He has certainly no good breeding, nor does he discover, at intervals, any good nature : He seems to have absolutely a depraved appetite ; he has not the least relish for his Wife's person. As to her mind, he never had taste enough to be capable of enjoying its beauties. She is doomed, therefore, to be quite buried alive, while *he* lives, (for I dare swear nothing can shake her Virtue,) and to be a stranger to all the pleasures of existence. One would not, indeed, wish
to

to sully her Virtue : She appears so immaculately pure, that it would be a pity to fix a single blemish upon her chastity, which renders her an object so inexpressibly amiable --- As to any hopes of *Astell's* dying, and leaving her at liberty, I dare not indulge them, though he certainly gives her as fair a chance for his death as she can possibly desire. He drinks hard, rides hard, connects himself, in the most imprudent manner, with the most infamous Women, and games with such intrepidity, that few, except the boldest adventurers, can match him. These pursuits, you may tell me, perhaps, will not kill him : They may tempt him, however, to be his own Executioner, and I shall never enter into any dispute about the mode of his death. His exit, either in a genteel, or a vulgar way, will be

equally agreeable to me---I should be glad, methinks, to demand satisfaction of him for his behaviour to his excellent Wife---and yet, should I be fortunate enough to run him through the body, can I venture to solicit her to consider me, even for having done her the greatest service in the world, by removing her Tyrant out of it. Every way I am in a desperate situation at present---and as my residence here will only sharpen my resentment, without enabling me to rescue the Goddess of my Idolatry from her wretchedness, I shall remove myself from this place; but I must, before my departure, execute a small piece of revenge against Lady *Free-love*---You shall be acquainted with my proceedings in due time.

I am yours as usual,

E. B.

L E T T E R XVI.

Mrs. OSWALD to Miss HALES.

I Am quite over-whelmed, my dear *Marianne*, with melancholy and discontent. Poor Mrs. *Astell* has received such treatment from the wretch her Husband, as no Woman but herself would have borne --- Yet she is all patience, meekness, and composure --- I am far from being an advocate for your modern Wives, but I think such treatment, without the least provocation, calls for some resentment, though at the same time I must confess, that there is a considerable deal of address required to discover it in a proper manner. Mrs. *Astell* acts very wisely, perhaps, by not flying out, as I should be apt to do, if so

G 3 highly

highly provoked: She certainly raises her character extremely by her behaviour, and I cannot help earnestly wishing to see her amply rewarded for her exemplary conduct. Instead of rewarding her, her brutal Husband, blind to her Virtues and her Accomplishments, treats her with a grossness which is disgusting beyond expression--- She cannot possibly feel any affection for such a Man---and of what value is that regard which arises from duty alone? I am but too sensible, my dear Miss *Hales*, what a joyless, insipid life I myself led, with a Man, whom I could not, on any account, love; and how different my sensations have been since my acquaintance with *the* Man whom I *could* love, were he disposed to give me sufficient encouragement to believe that my partiality in his favour would

would afford him pleasure--- But he is gone --- He went, without giving me reason to hope for his attachment to *me*; — but I have the satisfaction to hear, that he is not attached to any other Woman.

There were several Visitors the night before he left *Astell Place*, some at Cards, some amusing themselves in chatting parties --- A Gentleman, who had been for some time talking to *Byron*, said, at last, A Man so formed to please, so capable of preserving a heart, living without any kind of attachment, is rather an unnatural character.

How do you know that I have not any attachment? replied *Byron*, smiling.

You all have attachments, undoubtedly, cried I, looking at Colonel *Frampton*.

Not I, Madam, upon honour, answered he, though I have long wished to be attached.

This reply was delivered in so firm, so resolute a tone, that I felt the impropriety of my behaviour, and blushed an excuse for it. He seemed, I thought, sorry for having disconcerted me. He threw down his eyes, and when he raised them again, fixed them on me in a very particular manner.

I then ventured—was I to blame?—to discover the pleasure I felt; but I endeavoured to discover it only with my looks---He appeared to be all life and spirit upon the occasion.

When the Company broke up Cards, he contrived, unperceived, to take my hand, and to seat me at the table, pressing it gently at the same time. I was so transported, *Mari-*
anne,

anne, that I almost forgot myself --- I believe I returned the pressure --- My eyes were opened, however, and I was ashamed. I fancied that I had been too free: I trembled, lest he should entertain a wrong opinion of me --- That he entertained such an opinion of me is but too true, as he left the *Park* next morning by five o'clock, leaving me quite overwhelmed with vexation, to find myself so grossly mistaken. --- But to return to our dear *Maria*: Her troubles are infinitely beyond any of mine, and I blush to complain of them. --- Would you believe, that all *Astell's* cruel usage (which, by the way, I never heard of from *her*, I was informed of it by *Byron*, who intreated me, at the same time, to do every thing in my power to defend her against his brutality) was occasioned by her refusing to ex-

pose herself, at Lady *Freelove's* request, by bathing in the Park? Is it not hard, Miss *Hales*, that any Woman should suffer for her Discretion? And yet this is a fact---Lady *Freelove* complained to *Astell* of the insults she received from his Wife. She has not been here since; but she sent a note and her chaise for Miss *Burrell*, who is gone, with her Brother, to the Grove. Mrs. *Astell*, notwithstanding what she had endured, tried to persuade *Kitty* to stay here, but she could not prevail. The Girl will be quite spoilt undoubtedly. She was almost insufferable before, but it is Lady *Freelove's* chief study, it seems, to engross all the Men, and to corrupt all the Women: And this unthinking Girl, either from too great an inclination to fall in with her Ladyship's plan, or too little attention to the
confe-

consequences naturally to be expected from such an intimacy, has suffered herself to be seduced, at least for the present, and it will be well for her if she returns to us with her Mind and her Reputation unsullied.

We were talking of her last night : *Byron* said, that he looked upon *Kitty* as a Girl who had no sinister views, and that he imagined her indiscretions might be attributed either to her ignorance of evil, or to her want of judgment.

I could not help smiling, I confess, at his apology for *Kitty's* conduct, in which his good nature was more discernible, I thought, than his good sense. Mrs. *Astell* thought so too, I believe, for she looked very serious. She is, indeed, become more pensive than usual---I cannot wonder at her

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pensiveness, considering what she must necessarily feel; but as she had borne her Husband's brutal behaviour so well, I was in hopes that it had not made the deep impression on her apprehended by us --- I cannot, however, help being exceedingly concerned at the gloom which at present hangs over her, and which *Byron* and I are equally unable to dissipate. Write to her, my dear Miss *Hales*, and with *your* enlivening pen try to restore her to her former chearfulness.

I am, my dear *Marianne*,

Your very affectionate Friend,

and humble Servant,

H. OSWALD.

L E T.

LETTER XVII.

Mr. BYRON to Sir GEORGE GRAY:

I Have hit upon an excellent scheme to punish Lady *Freelove* for her folly, if such a Woman *can* be punished by being exposed. I have some doubts concerning her *feeling* on this occasion; yet I think that when she finds herself ridiculed by the very persons whom she has ever been most studious to please, she will be affected, and made sensible of the extreme absurdity and indelicacy of her behaviour.—My scheme, however, may at least cure *Kitty Burrell* of her folly.

I went to Sir *Harry Granger*, who lives about a mile from hence. I told him, *George Beale*, and Colonel *Scamper*, that there might be some diversion for them, if they would contrive to

to be in a particular part of Lord *Freelove's* Park, towards the cool of the evening: Telling them, at the same time, that they must promise before-hand to act like Men of Honour, as the company to be met there had characters to keep up, and as I only wanted to frighten them.

They laughed heartily at the thoughts of surprizing the Water Nymphs, in all their *batling Beauties*, and earnestly requested to be acquainted with their names.

When I mentioned Lady *Freelove*, they actually discovered rather contempt and disgust, than any desire to improve the opportunity she was so willing to give every man who fell in her way: But when I added, that she had drawn in a wild, unthinking country Girl to accompany her, who, alike

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alike regardless of scandal and the indelicacy of such a proceeding, had consented, I believed, merely from being pressed by her Ladyship, without reflecting upon the consequences, they unanimously said they would go, and see their new *Diana*.

Remember you are upon honour, added I—You are only to frighten them.

George loudly declared, that he imagined no Women, who had courage enough to throw themselves naked into a puddle of water, in an open Park, would be easily alarmed, and that downright extremities alone would have any effect upon them.

The rest of the company appearing to entertain sentiments of the same kind, I told Sir *William Frampton* what

what I had done, when I returned to *Astell-Park*, and desired him to make himself of their party, to prevent his hot headed companions from going too far. I had several reasons for not chusing to appear in the affair myself.

They all repaired to the place appointed, when they thought the Nymphs would be in a state of Nature; and Sir *William*, after having been, with some difficulty, admitted of the party, kept his companions, by his address, in tolerable order.

They took the path close by some trees, which in a manner inclosed this piece of water, but which were not so thick as to hinder them from seeing, according to their own account, what virtuous Women ever conceal, and what Decency forbids me to paint.

On

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On the noise occasioned by approaching footsteps, and approaching voices, (for Sir *William* purposely began to talk loud, to give the Ladies proper notice that they might make as decent a retreat as they possibly could — tho' the Colonel, &c. &c. cursed him for his chattering,) the frightened *Kitty*, a little resembling *Diana* surprized by *Acteon*, first plunged over head, then rose and made for the banks, twitched up some linen, threw a chintz negligee across her shoulders, and ran, with her flowing locks, to a stone-built house, designed as a shade for deer. *Scamper* was quite in rapture, and would have run after her, but was stopped by the Colonel, who gave the terrified *Hoyden* time to dress — while *Beale* rushed upon Lady *Freelove*, who appeared like a Mermaid upon the water. He was soon joined by *Scamper* and
Grainger,

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Grainger, who railled my Lady so much, that the disappointed Nereid hung her head in bashful silence, and absolutely blushed: Yes, even Lady *Freelove*, the assured, the undaunted, the impudent Lady *Freelove* blushed; yet I actually believe her blushes arose from her having been left, after all the raillery levelled against her, to put on her cloaths quietly with only her *Woman* to wait on her, than from any liberties which might have been taken with her. May this be a warning to those Females, whose constitutions require such cooling amusements, to chuse a more retired spot for the enjoyment of them: For had not Sir *William Frampton*, who is indisputably a Man of Honour, been of the party. I will not say what might have happened to *Kitty*. Let Girls like her, with more levity than wit, be taught,
by

by her example, to be cautious about their company: For though they may really mean no harm themselves, they may be brought into a great many indiscretions, by associating with Women who, having once lost all pretensions to Modesty, eagerly seek for every opportunity to draw others into their situation. I am glad, however, that Mrs. *Astell* is so innocently revenged. If Miss *Kitty* loses a Husband by this foolish frolick in *Freelove-Park*, she will have nobody to blame but herself. Young Women should very early in life habituate themselves to resist all improper solicitations; they should often avail themselves of the monosyllable No, which is extremely serviceable upon many occasions. The ardent Lover often feels his passion increased by the coy behaviour of the Mistress of his Heart, who, though she

she does a violence to her inclination by modestly opposing his wishes with a Negative, takes the surest way to raise herself in his esteem. If Women would be less froward in their behaviour to their Lovers, they would quicken their advances to them; but the Flirts in hanging sleeves of the present age are too conceited, and too knowing to take advice: Even warning has no effect upon them. How miserably is the education of young Women neglected? who, while their *ever-green* Mothers and Grandmothers look upon themselves as their rivals, think they are sufficiently qualified to mix with their company if they chatter *French*, translate *Italian*, kick their heels in a Cotillon, languish in an Allemande, warble Gondolier Ballads, join in a Catch, and, to finish all, fill up the vacant corner
of

of a Quadrille Table. How can *we* single young Fellows ever expect to find Girls fit to make tolerable Wives, while they attend only to externals, and to the most useless externals, the most trifling ones? How barbarously is the female Mind disregarded, in which the seeds of Virtue, Delicacy, and Truth should be early implanted.— But to quit a subject which has tired *my* hand; and *your* head will, no doubt, be fatigued with my reflections upon it before you get to the end of my letter; let me return to Mrs. *Astell*. — She is, at last, become so fully convinced of her Husband's ill treatment of her, that it has made her quite melancholy, yet she still “looks like Patience upon a Monument, smiling on Grief.” The sight is too affecting — I have made a thousand efforts to remove her dejection: It is sometimes, I think,

think, lessened, but it soon returns with redoubled violence.

In CONTINUATION.

Kitty Burrell is just come back to *Asell-Park*, somewhat sobered, in my opinion, by her late adventure; yet there is still a giddy wildness in her carriage with which I cannot be pleased. However, to do the Girl justice, she takes no small pains to give me pleasure. Not that I have the vanity to imagine that she has any particular attachment to me: The truth is, I believe she would be mighty glad to be well married, especially as she begins to be sensible of her mistake, in accommodating herself to *Lady Freelove's* plan, and fears, probably, that her past behaviour may deter those good-natured generous Fellows,

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lows, inclined to marry, from venturing upon such a frolicksome Filly. I have, indeed, thought, for some time, that this world will be completely a place resembling Heaven, where, we are told, no persons are married, or given in marriage: Though I am thoroughly disposed to believe, that a Man is not much better situated with an extravagant Jade of a Mistress, than with a lascivious Devil of a Wife. And so I wish you good night.

E. B.

LET-

L E T T E R XVIII.

From the Same to the Same.

WHAT a delightful agitation of spirits am I in! and yet I can hardly give credit to my senses: But it must be so: I could not be totally mistaken. --- Would you believe it, *George*? the very identical Drawing, which I so much wished to see, is my Portrait, my exact Image, or else I do not know myself--- I found it out by the oddest adventure imaginable.

Having been raillyng *Kitty Burrell* upon her late intended amusement in *Freelove-Park*, I proceeded at last, animated by the subject, to take more liberties

liberties than I designed. Where is the Man, *George*, who is always upon his guard?

Mrs. *Astell* left the room: If Mrs. *Oswald* had followed her, *Kitty* and I might have, perhaps, carried the jest too far. These coming Girls play the devil with a Fellow of my warm constitution.

Turning about, and seeing Mrs. *Oswald* frown—I have already told you, that her frowns are rather formidable—I checked my vivacity, and let the Girl go.—

On my walking out of the way of Mrs. *Oswald*, I met Mrs. *Astell* upon the stairs. Before I came up to her she had her eyes intently fixed upon a piece of Vellum, which she held in her hand.— On seeing me, she started, and seemed

ready to scream: Her spirits were so much agitated, that the Vellum dropped from her lovely fingers.

I caught it up immediately, in order to return it to her, and as there was no writing to be seen, imagined I might, without being guilty of any unpoliteness, look at it. Conceive my astonishment when I discovered my own Likeness, and so admirably executed, that I cannot express what I felt, or what I said upon the occasion: I only know that I made an exclamation, while my eyes were fixed on the face of the dear Artist. — *She* threw *her's* down instantly, with a blushing confusion which mocks all description, so many new charms did it add to her beautiful features.

Urged by an impulse which was not to be resisted, I seized her hand:

It

It trembled in mine ; and it was lucky, indeed, that I *did* seize it, for she was ready to sink down at my feet, so excessive was the flutter she was in. She tried, however, with all the strength she had left, to pull her hand away from mine, but her emotions were so violent, that she certainly would have fallen had I not supported her in my arms till she recovered. She made great efforts to recover herself, and at last succeeded ; though she was even then so much embarrassed that I was quite alarmed about her — I began, indeed, to tremble for her health. I was really so anxious, that I found I did not express myself with the readiness I wished — Just when I was attempting to stammer out a sort of an excuse for having discovered what, circumstanced as we were, could not be concealed, she broke abruptly from

me, catching away the Drawing at the same time, and left me standing motionless, as if I was that moment awaked from a dream; and I *had*, it is true, been lost in a most charming delirium. — To suppose that she had taken a satisfaction in not only tracing out, but in highly finishing my Picture—what a transporting thought! Yet why am I so transported? Do not people who are ingenious enough to take Likenesses, copy from every body, from those who are *not* agreeable, as well as from those who *are*? — But why, then, did Mrs. *Astell* discover so much perturbation upon my finding her out? Yet that perturbation might have arisen from a delicacy peculiar to Women who have finer feelings, and more exquisite sensibility than the majority of their sex. — To the common run of Women Mrs.

Astell

Astell is, indeed, infinitely superior — No—I only duped myself when I fancied that I was any way concerned in the disturbance of her mind. Good God! how ridiculous do we sometimes make ourselves by our notions! We first fancy we are in love, we then imagine that we are beloved, and, on a sudden, take it into our heads that we are detested. Precisely in this situation do I feel myself at present.

IN CONTINUATION.

H——ns! what a bustle was this little Drawing destined to make! It has endangered the life of the most lovely of Women.—When she left me, with it in her hand, she went down into the Housekeeper's room, and I went into the Library to write

to *you*.—While I was writing I recollected that I had some papers to inclose, about which you sent me a letter, and which I had forgotten. I hurried up stairs to fetch them. On my return I saw Mrs. *Astell* a few paces before me on the stairs. Looking back (on hearing somebody behind her) she hurried on, at the sight of *me* missed her step, and fell to the bottom. Good God! what were my feelings at that instant? I ran, I flew to her—I raised her, lifeless, in my arms, supported her head on my bosom—for she was stunned with her fall—and called for help as loudly as I could.

Not a creature—though there are so many Servants in the house—happened to hear me.

I knew

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I knew not what to do. I was embarrassed to a degree.

The sweet, suffering Angel, at length opened her eyes, while I was pressing her to my beating heart, and asking her where she was hurt, looked wildly at me, and then, with a faint voice, cried, I am sorry, Mr. *Byron*, to give you so much trouble. Pray call *Fletcher* to lead me up stairs.

Let *me* lead you up, replied I, raising her on her feet—Where are you hurt? Whither was you going?

To burn a piece of paper, answered she, with a more lively glow—I mean I was going to give *Fletcher* orders about the *rasberry jam*.

She looked down, conscious of having, once in her life, uttered an untruth. Pity, tenderness, and some-

H 4 thing

thing still more! --- the most affectionate concern, indeed, prompted me to say and do every thing to relieve her. --- I almost carried her to her Dressing-room, for she could not set one of her feet to the ground: She had strained it. --- I placed her on a sofa, and then, at her request, rang for *Fletcher*. --- Retreating backwards, I found myself scarce able to leave her: I wished, indeed, to be desired to stay: I wished still more to have a right to wait on her, to help her, to comfort her, and to watch over her with all the fond assiduity of an enraptured Lover.

What a wretch is *Astell*! What a treasure does he neglect! A treasure which thousands would purchase at the hazard of their lives.

As

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As soon as I left this charming Woman, I hurried away, in search of Mrs. Oswald, and again intreated her to be particularly careful of her Friend. Adieu.

L E T T E R XIX.

Mrs. ASTELL to Miss HALES.

I Am confined, my dear *Marianne*, with a sprained foot, which has occasioned me a great deal of uneasiness, and a great deal of pleasure.

You may remember, that I long ago told you I intended to destroy the Drawing I had made of one of the most amiable Men in the world, but something or other always happened to prevent me. To say truth, indeed, I did not know how to dispose of it—The weather being warm, we have had no fires here a great while, I could not, therefore, burn the Drawing according to my intention; and I chose to burn it, for I could not think of tearing it in pieces, on many accounts.

T'other

T'other day I fancied the Copy so very like the Original, that I could not bear to keep it any longer. I went, therefore, to carry it down to *Fletcher's* room, who was, I knew, boiling up some rasberries in sugar, and designed to put it into the stove. Whom should I meet upon the stairs but *Mr. Byron*. Terrified to death, lest he, of all Men, should see it, I was thrown into such a flutter, that I let it fall out of my hands.—He took it up, and, after having earnestly examined it, looked at me in such a manner, as to convince me that he was the only Man from whom it should have been concealed.---I was entirely disconcerted.. I felt my face glow; I trembled; I was ready to sink. He threw his arm round me, pressed my hand in his---In short,

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H 6 my

my Dear, he frightened me; that is, I was frightened, lest I should say or do something that might occasion farther mistakes: I therefore broke from him abruptly.

When I came down to *Fletcher* she had not begun to light the stove. Scarce knowing what I did, I went up, and staid some time --- When I thought I should meet with no more disappointments, I proceeded again towards *Fletcher's* room. --- On hearing *Byran* behind me upon the stairs, I hurried to get out of his way, and fell to the bottom. I was a little stunned with my fall. When I recovered, I found myself in his arms. He was very anxious to know where I was hurt, very assiduous to give me help, and insisted upon carrying me up stairs. I begged him to ring for *Fletcher,*

Fletcher, and to leave me, though I believe he did not hear what I said --- He seemed extremely unwilling to go, yet he did go, but returned again soon afterwards with *Mrs. Oswald*, and both of them together have studiously endeavoured every moment to amuse me, to entertain me. *Mr. Byron* is particularly solicitous about me: He does, indeed, too much, as I have a heart not steeled by insensibility, as I am not blind to the united graces, personal and intellectual. — He spends his whole time in striving to alleviate my pain, to lessen my anxiety, and to raise my depressed spirits. Were I able to walk, I would, most certainly, keep more out of his way; but as it is, I cannot fly from him. He conducts himself, 'tis true, with great propriety and discretion, and by so doing is still more estimable in
my

my eyes; yet I tremble, lest the politeness with which I am obliged to treat him, (with which I ought to treat him, in order to make some return to him for the pleasure he is perpetually giving me,) should offend Mr. *Astell*, or induce him, or any other person, to imagine that Mr. *Byron* is too particular in his civilities to me: And yet, *Marianne*, should I harbour such apprehensions, if they might not reasonably be entertained? Do I not, by supposing that any body will take notice of Mr. *Byron's* attentions to me, while there is really nothing censurable in them, discover that they are but too agreeable to me? — It is the consciousness of my extreme sensibility which makes me so fearful. Be assured, however, my dear Friend, that I will endeavour to keep the strictest guard over myself, that

that nothing may escape me sufficient to shew the great satisfaction I feel--- the satisfaction I cannot help feeling --- when I think of the proofs which I receive of his regard for me; proofs which arise only from his compassion, I imagine, and from the natural sweetness of his disposition. --- He looks upon me at present as an object in distress, and generously seizes every opportunity to hinder me from reflecting too much upon my accident, or upon the excessive indifference of Mr. *Astell* upon this occasion, who, even while he visited me as a Lover, did not behave with half Mr. *Byron's* present assiduity. How then must *Byron* behave to the Woman to whom he is tenderly and sincerely attached, if he is so very studious to please *me*? And where is the Woman who can refuse her heart to a Man so every way

way capable of charming? It is no wonder, my Dear, that he should be so nice in his choice of a Wife; he deserves the *best* of Women:---But I talk too much about him---I think too much about him---Yet how can I possibly banish, a single moment, from my mind, the Man who takes such pains to remove my sorrow, and to afford me all the amusement I am capable of enjoying --- Were he a Brother, a Friend, a mere Stranger, Gratitude would urge me to make *some* acknowledgments to him --- I must only act with circumspection, my *Marianne*, and check myself whenever I am going to express them with too much strength and vivacity.

Mrs. *Oswald* is very kind, but tho' she is naturally chearful, her spirits
are

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are not, I think, much higher than mine at present.

Write to me soon, my Dear, and believe me to be ever,

Yours most affectionately,

M. A.

L E T.

LETTER XX.

Miss HALES to Mrs. ASTELL.

I Pity you exceedingly, my dear *Maria*, though you are in a situation which would excite envy in the breasts of the majority of our Sex. To be attended, and to be entertained by such a Man as *Byron*, who, according to your account, devotes the greatest part of his time to you --- how enviable is your situation! --- If you are not disturbed by the jealousy and malice of those Women who would gladly be in your condition, you will have very good luck indeed, especially if those Women, who from being at liberty to receive his services, imagine they are more entitled to them than you are. Do not

not suppose, my dear Friend, from what I have said, that I think you are insensible of the risque you run by having so amiable a Man constantly endeavouring to please you. I only wish to strengthen the prudent resolutions you have made: You cannot, certainly, be too much upon your guard. I can easily guess how dangerous it is to be frequently exposed to the conversation of such a seducing Man: A Man who cannot be properly encouraged, while you are under an indissoluble engagement to another. Mr. *Astell's* behaviour is not by any means to be justified; but his neglect and ill-treatment will not furnish you with any apologies for your breach of your marriage contract — And I dare say you have too great a regard for yourself, and are too seriously attentive to the duty of a
Wife,

Wife, to give way to any sensations which ought not to be indulged.

Mrs. *Oswald* is in a very different situation: Yet I do not approve of any Woman's encouraging a hopeless passion. — Those who are in that way, generally feel their spirits too deeply affected by their disappointments; and, I confess, I think we never appear to so much advantage, as when we appear with a cheerfulness which results from a heart perfectly at ease.

I met Colonel *Frampton* the other day, by mere accident, at Mr. *Moor's*, with whom my Father and I dined. He appeared so extremely glad to see me, that I was rather surprized, though we were always upon very friendly terms. He seized my hands, and asked me after *you*: He then mentioned every body in the neighbourhood before he

he spoke of Mrs. *Oswald*; but I could not help thinking, from several observations which I made, that she was not, though last, the least in his thoughts — I may, I believe, say, that he is *in love* with her, according to the common phrase. Lovers are said to be almost always blind; I do not think she has any reason to despair: Yet I would not say too much, for fear of being mistaken. I do not pretend to second sight, but I think he is a modest, well-bred Man; too modest, perhaps, to succeed — I mean not to reflect upon Mrs. *Oswald*, *Maria*, whom I highly esteem, but Mr. *Frampton*'s apprehensions about giving offence, may have tied up his tongue, at a time when his speaking would have been of great service to him.

Having a mind to try him a little, from my esteem for *him*, and from my affection

affection for Mrs. *Oswald*, I told him what I thought of her Person, Understanding, and Behaviour.

He replied — My Brother will be very happy with her.

He spoke those words in a hurry, as if he was glad to get rid of them. — I looked hard at him, and then said, I did not much think that Mrs. *Oswald* intended to be Lady *Framp-ton*.

He listened eagerly, and seemed to devour my words --- If I may ask, without impertinence, said he, I should be glad to know why you think so.

I have my reasons.

He bowed, and begged pardon.

You have committed no fault, replied I --- One cannot help one's conjectures;

jectures; mine may be quite wrong; time will discover who is in the right.

You are, I dare say, Miss *Hales*, answered he, as I suppose you know the Man who stands highest in Mrs. *Oswald's* esteem.

I do, Colonel: But you are sensible that we do not give our hands always to those whom we esteem.

It is not always in our power, said he, hastily.

It is in Mrs. *Oswald's* power, replied I, to marry whom she pleases: But if the favourite Man does not declare his wishes, how is she to act?

He changed colour, and looked exceedingly disconcerted, but answered, coolly enough I thought --- Indeed I do not know, Madam.

Thus, you see, he appears to like Mrs. *Oswald*, and, at the same time, seems deter-

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determined to take no steps to gain her. You may make what use you chuse of this intelligence, which I communicate to you, that you may prepare Mrs. Oswald for some information of the same kind from me.

Lord *Free love* cannot be expected to recover, I hear. Lady *Free love*, therefore, will not long, I imagine, be your Neighbour.--- That you be may freed from every thing disagreeable to you, is the sincere wish of

Your truly affectionate Friend,

M. HALE.

P. S. I forgot to tell you, I met Mr. *Randolph's* Father here also.

LET-

LETTER XXI.

Mr. BYRON to Sir GEORGE GRAY:

MRS. *Astell* gains new strength every day, but, every day, behaves more coolly, more forbiddingly. Far from being conscious of having done any thing to offend her, I am rather induced to imagine, that I have erred on the other side; but Women, even the best, are capricious beings; I am, therefore, determined to go to my own house. *Astell*, indeed, is very much from home, and were he more at home, we should seldom be together, as our tastes are so widely different. I hardly know why I first thought of coming hither at all, for I was not then acquainted with Mrs.

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I

Astell's

Astell's various charms; but *he* and I had been at College together, and at that time I thought him a good-natured fellow, though wrong-headed. I helped him out of several scrapes in which he entangled himself, and he was fond of me: Nay, to do him justice, he had rather, I believe, have me stay here now; yet I cannot tell why, as we have very small connections with each other: He does not wish me to be well with his Wife, I suppose: If he did, indeed, it would not signify at present --- I think her a lovely, but a very haughty and disdainful Woman. Were she at liberty this moment, I would not marry her, if she would have me; and yet, *George*, I fancy I could like to settle with a suitable companion, if there was a possibility of meeting with one; but there are so many difficulties, unsurmountable

mountable difficulties, attending such a movement, that though I am wearied to death with the life I lead, I cannot tell when I shall, whether I ever shall, change it. Were I only disposed to gratify my Senses, why this *Kitty Burrell* seems to be the very Thing to make a Wife of: But then has not *she* also appetites to indulge? and who can say, whether she will set bounds to them? She does not appear by any means to be formed for a Wife, according to my ideas of a domestic Companion, and yet the Girl is sufficiently insinuating: But when I look at, when I listen to, Mrs. *Astell*, I wonder at the amazing difference between them—I can hardly believe them to belong to the same species: Were the latter unmarried, and could she love me as passionately

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as I do her — What an intoxicating thought!

I am going to prepare for my journey to *Dorsetshire* without delay ; cannot you meet me there before the end of the summer ? Do if you can.

Adieu.

E. B.

P. S. *Frampton* is going, I believe. He would not, I believe, have staid so long, but on Mrs. *Oswald's* account ; so that *Randolph* and *Burrell* only remain here.

L E T-

L E T T E R XXII.

Mrs. OSWALD to Miss HALES.

I Am obliged to my dear *Marianne*, for the information in her letter to Mrs. *Astell*, relating to the only Man about whom I cannot be indifferent, till I am quite sure that he has a perfect aversion to me : I will then give him up : But till that time comes, I beg I may hear every thing concerning him, if he happens to fall into your way again. In return, I can inform you, that we have a Gentleman here who sends forth longing sighs after Miss *Hales*. Were you, indeed, as well acquainted with *Randolph* as I am, you could not suffer him to pine away those hours which

I 3

might

might be more successfully employed near another Woman, who would shew him more consideration.

Miss *Burrell* seems wonderfully inclined to comfort him under his disappointment, and I would fain have persuaded him to be kind.—I do not chuse, replied he, hastily, to unite myself to a Mermaid.

Sir *William Frampton* has left *Astell*, in consequence of my being more determined than ever not to marry him. I believe I shall never be married, as the only Man in the world with whom I fancy I can be happy, makes not the smallest advances, tho' he knows I am at liberty: But I will no longer tire you about my own affairs.

Mr. *Byron* is going to leave us; his departure will, you may be sure, throw

throw a thick gloom over us: Few Men, I will allow, are more amiable than Mr. *Byron*, yet I secretly wish he was gone, for reasons which I need not mention; you will easily guess them. I would not have my Friend too much exposed to his Affiduities, to which, in spite of all her Discretion, she cannot be totally indifferent. No Woman in the world can conduct herself with more Prudence, yet it is vastly better for her, I think, to be out of the way of Temptation.

I confess I find myself much more at ease, now *Frampton* is gone, though I was exceedingly vexed when he took leave of us. While he stayed here I was perpetually anxious: I was almost every moment afraid of his taking too little notice of me, of his paying too much attention to other

people: The watchings, the fidgets, the frettings, the repinings, which he occasioned—very innocently on his side—are not to be described, and could hardly be repaid by a life of the most uninterrupted tenderness. In short, *Marianne*, I sometimes heartily despise myself, for giving way to an inclination from which I was never encouraged to expect any felicity; and I should have so thorough a contempt for myself, were I looked upon as a Woman fighting for a Husband, that I am resolved to endeavour to conquer every rising sensation in favour of the Colonel—I will even try to drive him from my thoughts as much as possible; yet I like to hear where he is, and what he is doing; it can be no crime to wish him happiness with another Woman.

In

IN CONTINUATION.

Randolph has been sent for by his Father. *Astell* has invited a new *Sett* down. I wish, as well as Mrs. *Astell*; that they may prove as agreeable companions as those who are going to leave us: There is no harm in driving one pretty fellow out of our heads with another.

I am,

my dear Miss *Hales*,

Ever affectionately yours,,

H. O..

L E T T E R XXIII.

Mr. BYRON to Sir GEORGE GRAY.

I Have left *Astell-Park*; and I have left there the charming Mistress of it.---I tore myself away at the very moment when I fancied that she parted from me with regret. I thought she had been particularly serious for the two or three last days. I could not find that her Husband had exercised any new acts of tyranny against her; yet she seemed desirous of being alone, and rather avoided *me* more than any body. I was hurt, I confess, exceedingly by her behaviour; and though I had resolved to go, I could not help being anxious to know whether she was really displeased with me,

me, or whether she was only unhappy on *Astell's* account. I followed her about from place to place. At last I was not able to endure the tormenting suspense, and yet I knew not well what to say. I was afraid of disclosing my real thoughts too freely; I was, at the same time, leath to conceal them entirely.

The evening before my departure I found her sitting in a melancholy attitude, looking upon something which she held in her hand; from the size of it, I imagined it to be the very Miniature that had occasioned so much confusion; but the composure with which she removed it on my approaching, made me think I was mistaken. I wished to know, but did not care to be thought impertinent---I sat down by her---I leave this agreeable

ble place to-morrow, said I; and therefore hope you will indulge me with as much of your company to-night as you can spare me.

She sighed, and turned away her head; but made no answer.

I took her hand,--- She drew it back, but gently, and still continued silent --- I am so entirely out of spirits to-night, Mr. *Byron*, said she, at last, that I am not capable of entertaining you.

You always either entertain or interest me, replied I --- and I am particularly interested about you at this moment, because I fear that something lies upon your mind which distresses you. Could I but remove it before I go, I should leave you with less reluctance.

She

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She sighed again; looked down, and then up again in *my* face, with so much tenderness and gratitude, so sweetly expressed in her own --- if my eyes deceived me not --- that she almost deprived me of my senses.

I am very much obliged to you, Sir, for your attention to me during my confinement---

She was going on, but I stopped her --- Pressing her hand, I told her how much pleasure it gave me, to think that any attentions of mine had been agreeable to her; adding, that I should feel myself the happiest of Men, could I drive away all anxiety from her mind.

I looked what I felt. At that instant her charmed eyes met mine, replete with an affecting languor which melted my soul.

Starting

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Starting up on a sudden, she broke from me.

I was pained by this abruptness just when I thought she appeared to be most pleased with me---I ventured to detain her --- to seize her hand again. She turned towards me with the same enchanting looks: She returned my pressure: Then, hastily clapping her handkerchief to her face, burst from me, and hurried away.

I stood looking after her as if my soul had been separated from my body. I would have given the world only to have asked her if she was unwilling to have me leave her? But I did not dare to propose such a question --- I could not think of making any addition to her uneasiness, if any uneasiness she *should* feel on my account.

We

The UNFASHIONABLE WIFE. 183

We met again at supper. Neither of us spoke much, though Mrs. Oswald, good-naturedly, endeavoured to enliven us. She intended to do us a pleasure by her kind behaviour, but we did not appear to be pleased with it --- I, certainly, was not. I chose to indulge a thousand reflections, which arose from observations made on Mrs. Astell's carriage; observations which I could make with ease, as there was no other company to draw off my attention. She spoke but little, yet I thought she took more notice of me than usual---I took no pains to seize another opportunity to bid her adieu. ---I was afraid to trust myself a second time; I, therefore, only suffered my eyes to speak, and left the Park at break of day. Before my departure, I invited all the company left there, to accompany the
Master

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Master and Mistress of it, to spend some time with me at *Byron Lodge* --- *Astell*, inconsiderate mortal, promised to bring his *Maria*. She said nothing. I could not expect her to say any thing. --- I found a moment to bid Mrs. *Oswald* more particularly farewell, and earnestly recommended to her the care of her lovely Friend.

She replied --- No person has a higher esteem for Mrs. *Astell* than myself, nor wishes to be of more service to her; but I shall be obliged to return home in a short time. I hope, however, to have the pleasure of Mrs. *Astell*'s company in *Wiltshire*.

She will then be in the next county to me, and she will be under the care of a sensible, agreeable, well-bred Woman, who is, I believe, her sincere

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cere Friend. Next to the protection of *my* arms, her residence with Mrs. *Oswald* will be attended with the greatest security.

I find myself exceedingly depressed just now, but must endeavour to rouse myself. I must not give way to this stupidity hanging about me: It will be of no kind of service to the charming *Maria*, or to

Your very sincere Friend,

EDWARD BYRON.

LET-

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L E T T E R XXIV.

Mrs. ASTELL to Miss HALES.

THE greatest part of our Company have left us, and Mrs. *Oswald* talks of going in a few days. She has earnestly begged me to accompany her, but I am afraid that Mr. *Astell* will not let me go, though he is so seldom at home, that I should imagine he might spare me very well. How much do I wish, my *Marianne*, that you were here, to supply the place of Mrs. *Oswald*. She is a most amiable Woman, and deserves to be happy. Is it not strange that Colonel *Frampton* should be blind to such merit?

Mr.

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Mr. *Byron* is gone too—I am surprized that *he* was not in love with her. He esteems her, I believe, sincerely. I am afraid I behaved very foolishly when he took leave of me. I was exceedingly dejected. I thought of Mrs. *Oswald's* approaching departure; I thought of the impossibility of my having my dear *Marianne* in her room: I dreaded to be left alone with Mr. *Astell*, still more dreaded to be left with his disagreeable Companions, after the departure of those who were so very entertaining. However, I fancy Mr. *Astell* is so much attached to *Kitty Burrell*, that he will not want any body else. Her Brother, who behaved with great politeness while he stayed, is gone to *Paris*.

Mrs.

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Mrs. *Oswald* takes a great deal of pains to make Miss *Burrell* think a little seriously sometimes ; but I am afraid her endeavours will not be successful: Not at present at least — She seems extremely displeased at Mr. *Byron's* going away: There is not a person, indeed, who does not regret his absence: Even Mr. *Astell*, though he differs from him so widely in his sentiments, appears to distinguish him in a particular manner. There is, certainly, an irresistible charm in *Merit*, which makes the most insensible take notice of it, and admire it.

I am sorry to send you so dull a Letter, but I am neither capable of contributing to my own amusement, nor to that of my Friends:

Yet

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Yet I am --- and ever shall remain,

Yours,

most affectionately,

M. ASTELL.

LET-

L E T T E R XXV.

Miss HALES to Mrs. ASTELL.

THE strangest, and most unexpected affair has happened. Mr. *Randolph*, the elder, did me the honour to take a prodigious fancy to me, on seeing me at Mr. *Moor's*, and asked my Father's consent, it seems, to my becoming his Daughter: But when he mentioned his design to his Son, upon his return from *Astell-Park*, the young Man peremptorily refused me. In consequence of that refusal, the old Gentleman came hither, in a violent passion, swearing that he would turn him out of doors, and disinherit him, if he did not make his addresses to me directly.

I was

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I was not a little astonished, *Maria*, I own, for I have had the vanity to believe, that the young Man had half a mind to make love to me—Let no Girl, therefore, harbour such flattering ideas for the future, nor take common Civilities for downright Declarations, lest she meets with the same disappointment I have received. It sits mighty easy upon me, however; so that I was quite capable of interposing in favour of poor *Randolph*. I earnestly intreated his Father not to be offended with him for what he could not help—Love and Hatred, Sir, added I, are involuntary Passions, and it is not in our power to command them.

He replied --- I agree with you, Madam; and therefore, as my Son has refused you, I cannot help desiring you to accept of *me*.

I could

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I could not refrain from laughing at the old Gentleman's description of his situation, but very freely told him, that I should civilly decline the honour he did me.

I suppose now, said he, you had rather marry *James*. Why, he is a good Lad in every thing but this Refusal, which is so contrary to Sense and Reason, that he must have quite lost his Wits.

Not at all, Sir, replied I; only consider, how unreasonable it is in you to expect your Son to like the Woman who happens to be agreeable to *you*. He may have fixed his affections on a very different person.

Perhaps he has, answered he; and for that reason I am in such a passion; for as you are the sort of Woman
whom

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whom I should chuse for my Daughter, I cannot think, patiently, on his having taken a ridiculous propensity to somebody else.

Why ridiculous? said I --- The Lady of his choice may be a thousand times more desirable than I am, and even to you, Sir, when you come to be acquainted with her. ---

'Pshaw---'pslaw, cried he, you only say so to quiet me, or you are ignorant of your own perfections. Indeed, Miss Hales, I never yet saw any young Woman I liked half so well in my life; and if the Boy still refuses you, I will, most assuredly, turn him quite off; I will no longer own him for a Son of mine.

Pray, Sir, replied I, moderate your impatience. I dare say Mr. *Randolph*

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is

is not so much to blame as you imagine he is: We cannot controul our Hearts: Our Affections are not at our command. ---

Why that's true, answered he: But I think the Boy must have been deaf and blind, to have lived in the same house with you so long, without falling in love with you.

He told you, then, said I, smiling, that he did not like me?

No; he was not so lost to all Sense and Reason neither, cried the old Man, in a heat; he was not so mad as to say *that*; but he told me positively that he would not marry you, and desired I would not give your Father the trouble of talking about it.

On hearing this, I began to be sure I had been mistaken in supposing that
he

he had ever liked me, and therefore said every thing I could think of, to soften the old Gentleman in favour of *Mr. Randolph*. He told me, at last, that if I could talk as much to the purpose to his Son as I had talked to him, it would do. --- He then left me, insisting upon his sending him to me, in spite of all my opposition to such an unnecessary proceeding. —

I have not the least dislike to an half hour's chat with *Randolph*: You may be certain that I shall feel myself quite at my ease with him; but I do not see what his Father can purpose by leaving us together. — He does not imagine, surely, that I shall *court* his Son. After all, *Maria*, Men are odd Creatures: Young or old, they are odd Creatures.

I am sorry to find that *Miss Burrell* is so regardless of her reputation, as to

give any improper encouragement to Mr. *Astell*—Such encouragement she does, I fear, give him, though you charge her not directly with so much indiscretion: But she is young, and thoughtless: Possibly she has no ill intentions, yet it would be better for her if she would listen to the advice of so sensible a Friend as Mrs. *Oswald*—I wish you would accompany Mrs. *Oswald* to *Wiltshire*. I ought not, indeed, having never been married, to give my opinion so freely; but I must own, I think a Woman should stay with her Husband, if he does not behave in a very unjustifiable manner.—I wish, my Dear, you had always the society of an agreeable, discreet, female Friend, to alleviate any distress occasioned by Mr. *Astell*; to lessen any anxiety you may feel on his account.—As to Mr. *Byron* I cannot say—forgive me—

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me — that I am sorry he is gone, though I am ready, at the same time, to do all possible justice to his uncommon merit. — Keep up your spirits, my Dear; I will try to persuade my Father to let me see you again before the end of the Summer. In the mean while believe me to be,

Ever affectionately,

Yours,

M. HALES.

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LET.

LETTER XXVI.

Mrs. ASTELL to Miss HALEs.

THE conclusion of your last Letter, my Dear, was quite a cordial to my spirits. What real pleasure would your Company give me?—Very little satisfaction have I in *Kitty Burrell's*: She spends her whole time in trifling with *Mr. Astell*: She draws him on by her fooleries, and then he takes improper liberties; and when he takes them, she affects to keep him at a great distance: By that sort of behaviour she puts him into a very ill humour, and, to make amends for it, encourages him to repeat his freedoms. --- Thus she spends the day.

Mrs. Oswald left us on *Friday*. While she was here *Kitty* conducted herself

The UNFASHIONABLE WIFE. 199

herself with rather more Discretion, but now it is all thrown aside; and so, I am afraid, will be every regard to Decency. Mr. *Astell* seems to study nothing but to please her--- On some pretence or other he has put off the Company who were to have come down here this week. I have, therefore, nobody to speak to but Miss *Burrell*, as Mr. *Astell* seldom answers I when I address myself to him.--- You would be exceedingly disgusted with *Kitty's* behaviour, I think. I told Mr. *Astell*, last night, that you had given me hopes of seeing you here again soon. Pray, my Dear, quicken this kind resolution as much as possible in favour of,

Your affectionate,

M. ASTELL.

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L E T-

LETTER XXVII.

Mrs. HALE to Mrs. ASTELL.

IN my last I informed you, my Dear, how much I was surprized at Mr. Randolph's behaviour: In this I confess that I am still more so.

On Tuesday morning he came here. I was at work in my dressing room. --- Thomas showed him up stairs. He looked a little disconcerted at the ease and good humour with which I received him, and seemed, for some time, at a loss to know what he should say.

Willing to have his embarrassment over, and to put an end to his suspense,

pence, I told him, that his Father had been with me the day before.

Yes, Madam, replied he; I very much fear that my Father has said many things about me by no means agreeable to you; but I beg you would excuse him, as he was prompted entirely by the favourable impressions which your person and character have made on him.

I do assure you, Sir, answered I, that he said nothing in the least disagreeable to me: On the contrary, I think, I am honoured by being looked upon as worthy of his approbation.

There is, undoubtedly, said he, a considerable satisfaction in being an object of universal esteem; but those who are so esteemed are liable to very tiresome persecutions.

I have not hitherto met with any, said I, smiling, nor do I imagine that my little merit is sufficient to occasion any unwelcome solicitations.

Your ignorance of your merit, Miss *Hales*, replied he, does not lessen it.

I once thought you superior to most of your Sex, Mr. *Randolph*, by supposing you incapable of Flattery, but I am afraid you will give me reason to change my good opinion of you with regard to Sincerity.

I admire you and esteem you, Madam, so exceedingly, so sincerely, that Adulation is quite out of the question.

I am obliged to you, Sir; but I may venture to say, I believe, that you

you are mistaken in me—I do not deserve such high encomiums.

Permit me, then, to adore you in silence, Miss *Hales*, as I know that your modesty is equal to your virtue.

Here was a flight for you, *Maria*—I could not help beholding him with wonder.—I really thought that he endeavoured, by his high flown conceits, to atone for his having refused me. I bowed, but made no reply.

After having sat a while without speaking—during his silence he stirred I saw, but in vain, to suppress the sigh—he began to address me in the following manner:—My Father, Miss *Hales*, commanded me to wait on you; but be assured I will never be guilty of any thing, designedly,

for me to give you a moment's dis-
quiet.

I actually pitied the poor Creature, he appeared to be so distressed, and hastened to relieve him. --- Surely, Mr. Randolph, said I, as we were so long acquainted at Mr. *Apoll's* house, no apology is necessary for your calling on me, whenever it is agreeable to you.

The sooner had I pronounced those words, than his countenance underwent a change, which I will not attempt to describe. --- I will only say, that it appeared to be lighted up with a kind of fearful joy, as if he was pleased, and yet full of doubt at the same time. ---

Will Miss *Hales* permit me, said he, in a soft, small voice, to visit her,

her, to converse with her sometimes? Will she deign to look upon me as a Friend?

While I have no reason to look upon you in any other light, Mr. *Randolph*, replied I, you will certainly find me ready to receive you in the manner you wish for.

Delightful permission! cried he, with transported accents---When I abuse such a favour I shall deserve, indeed, to lose it---But possibly, Miss *Hales*, you may think I merit such a punishment only for wishing to arrive at the highest felicity to which I aspire, for wishing to gain your heart.

I confess, *Maria*, I was not a little surprized at hearing him talk in this strain, but, imagining I should like him
him

him immediately, replied, how do these protestations, Mr. *Randolph*, agree with your refusing me to your Father?

Good God! exclaimed he, with eagerness; could you, then, suppose me capable of refusing the only Woman in the world whom I have so long loved to adoration?

It was now my turn to look foolish, my Dear. I still thought, however, that this was some artifice of his, in order to get off with his Father: Yet I could not help feeling myself duped by the young Man, and that sensation threw a seriousness into my face, which alarmed him: By alarming him, it produced a complete discovery.

You change colour, Miss *Hales*, said he, while a deadly pale was visible
in

in *his* cheeks — I was afraid that I was mistaken; but be not disgusted with me: Though I doat on you to extravagance, I would sooner perish than occasion you a single moment's uneasiness. — Only give me leave, since I have gone so far, to open my whole heart to you, upon a subject which has long engaged all my attention, and filled me with more anxiety than I can express. — I know — I see you have humanity enough to pity me, though it may never be in your power to return my passion.

Indeed, my Dear, there were so many alterations in his looks, and his tones, while he spoke, and he seemed in so agitated a condition, that had he been my greatest Enemy, instead of my fondest Lover, I must have felt for him. — I, therefore, endeavoured

to

to raise his spirits, and to dissipate his painful apprehensions, by telling him that I was ready to hear him.

He then told so tender a Tale, the sincerity of which was evinced by the motion of every feature, and by every sigh which burst from his over-charged bosom — I really believe no Woman ever heard more fine things addressed to her, with so much patient attention — Yet, when he came to a pause, I could not help exclaiming — If all you have told me, Mr. Randolph, is true, how happened it that you refused me?

Because, replied he, eagerly, as you had always rather discovered an aversion to me, than an inclination for me, I dreaded nothing so much as the giving you pain, as I despaired of being ever capable of giving you pleasure:

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I refused you at once, because I was determined that you never should be, on *my* account, teased by *your* Father and mine, to marry a Man whom—I then believed, you could not love.

What a generous mind, *Maria*! I think I ought not to be ashamed to own, that his uncommon behaviour touched me.---I will not pretend to say, that I was in love with him immediately; but I felt those sentiments which will make him, I hope, by and by, as happy as he deserves to be: I pitied him, I esteemed him. He was, indeed, too much affected himself, at that instant, to bear a great deal upon the subject, for I could not avoid praising a carriage so delicate, so disinterested: My encomiums on it threw him into such a convulsion of joy, that he knew not what to do with him-

himself. --- He rose up, and sat down; his eyes glistened; his hands trembled; and he could hardly articulate a syllable. --- I begged him to compose himself, assuring him that I should ever have a regard for him, and that I should be always glad to see him. --- That assurance was, I found, almost too much for his head to endure --- He seized my hand, but in a very respectful manner, and said, You will admit me, then? You will give me leave, then, to see you, to love you? --- To see you, to love you, is the same thing. I cannot look on you, I cannot listen to you without --- But I will not tire you now, Miss *Hales*; I will leave you till I recover myself: I am sensible that I am too much elated to behave with the respect which is due to you. No Man,

The UNFASHIONABLE WIFE. 211

so intoxicated as I am, can possibly please: When I have more command over myself, I will venture to accept of your kind indulgence to visit you.

He then rose up to go; but I declare, *Maria*, I scarce thought him fit to be trusted by himself: He had a wildness in his looks and manner which disquieted me prodigiously. I, therefore, desired him to stay and spend the day with me. --- Come, said I, it is a fine cool morning, I will shew you the Garden and the Park.

His eyes sparkled with Joy. He pressed my hand with an eagerness which discovered the violence of his emotions---I believe I took it from him---He started, drew back some paces, and, with looks full of concern, said---I ask a thousand pardons;

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done; I know I am not just now to be trusted.

To shew him that I was not afraid of him, however, I smiled, and gave him my hand again--- He raised it, respectfully, to his lips, and then, as we were walking, offered to put it under his arm.

May I venture? said he, trembling from head to foot.

You may, replied I, leaning on him; though really I was afraid of saying too many encouraging things, while I wished to make him as happy as the nature of our situation would permit me.

By talking of indifferent matters, and turning his attention to the various objects around us, I brought him, at last, to himself; yet he, every now
and

and then, broke out --- How happy shall I make my Father! --- But it is you, my ever-amiable Miss *Hale*, who will bless us all!

I assure you, my dear *Maria*, that I felt a pleasure, of which I had never been sensible before, in the sincere affection of this worthy Creature --- for worthy he seems to be in every respect --- I should have wrote, indeed, to inform you of this unexpected event e'er now, but the truth is, I have been so much engaged in trying to restore Mr. *Randolph* to his Reason, and to return his Father's excessive Civilities, that I have not had a leisure moment. If ever Woman was adored by her Lover, I stand a fair chance, I believe, to be that Woman. He seems to live, to breathe for me alone; and I really think he would

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would rather die than do any thing
which would, he thought, be disa-
greeable to me. --- Will it be always
so, Maria?

Adieu.

M. H.

LET-

L E T T E R XXVIII.

Mrs. ASTELL to Miss HALES.

YOU ask me a question, my dear *Marianne*, which I cannot easily answer; and yet, upon second thoughts, I believe it may be answered by me without any difficulty. As I never experienced the pleasure of seeing Mr. *Astell*, even before marriage, desirous of making me happy, I could not expect to find him very obliging afterwards. --- He has, just now, particularly embarrassed me --- But let me first rejoice with you on your having met with an agreeable Man, so assiduous, so very solicitous about the possession of your heart, and so deserving of it. I always thought *Randolph* an amiable young man; I always thought,

thought, too, that he was very much attached to you. Yet you know I could never persuade you, during your stay with me, to be of my opinion.

Mr. Astell has disconcerted me extremely, by telling me, that he is determined to spend a month or six weeks at *Byran Lodge*, and that he shall take Miss *Burrell* and me with him. Will not this be a most indiscreet step? And yet nobody will think so but you and I, *Marianne*. I hope, however, that this scheme will not be executed, till you have been with me, for I should be very glad of your advice upon so important an occasion.

IN CONTINUATION.

Oh, *Marianne*! into what a disagreeable situation am I thrown? Mr.

Astell

Astell has just been with me, to tell me, that I must prepare to set out for *Dorsetshire* on *Saturday*, and that I must take every thing with me necessary for a long stay. I trembled, yet ventured to interrupt him, by informing him, that I expected *you* in a few days---I earnestly intreated him to stay here till you had made your visit: To leave *me*, at least, here to receive you. --- He positively refused my request, and added several things relating to our Friendship, which filled my eyes with tears, and prevented me from answering him.

Do, write to me, my dear *Marianne*, and tell me, if you do not think this is a strange scheme. Adieu.

M. A.

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L E T T E R XXIX.

Mr. BYRON to Sir GEORGE GRAY.

Byron Lodge.

WHAT a lucky Fellow I am!
 Would you believe it, George?
Astell, as if he knew how heavily my
 life drags on without the society of
 the Woman I love, is going to bring
 his Wife hither. --- Was ever any
 thing more to be wished for? ---
 But what a wrong-headed Mortal
 this *Astell* is? He was always diffe-
 rent from the rest of the world. I
 wonder whether the dear Creature is
 as pleased with her Husband's design
 as I am --- *Kitty Burrell* is to be of
 the party: The next Woman in the
 world

world whom I could fancy, were she discreet, and a little more polished. But what is *Kitty*, what is any other Woman, to Mrs. *Astell*? My heart bounds with joy at the bare-idea of being again under the same roof with her: Of having it in my power to contribute to her entertainment; to discover, every moment, the tender respect I feel for her; to watch every motion of her eyes, that I may fly to obey her wishes before she can even find time to utter them. --- I am wild to know whether she is as transported as I am with this *manœuvre*. I thought, when we parted, that she seemed affected to a degree at our separation --- I may be mistaken, however --- We Pup-pies in love are apt to be fanciful: And yet, that *returned pressure* spoke more forcibly than a thousand words. —

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How must I conduct myself?---I must not too much encourage a growing inclination that may render her miserable --- Nor can I deny myself the rapturous delight of finding her heart so tenderly disposed towards me. --- I must hasten to order every thing that can make her first reception agreeable, to induce her to prolong her residence with

Your truly affectionate Friend,

E. BYRON.

LET-

LETTER XXX.

*Mrs. ASTELL to Miss HALES.**Byron Lodge.*

I Have, I fear, missed your Letter by my removal hither, my dear *Marianne*. We arrived here last night. Nothing can exceed the friendly reception we met with, except the elegance of it. Mr. *Byron* thinks of every thing capable of either amusing, or entertaining us; and were not my heart but too apt to be susceptible of his infinite merit, and various powers of pleasing, I should be most happy in one of the delightfulest situations in the world, beautifully embellished by the hand of Nature and of Art, and attended by the most amiable of

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Men,

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Men, whose whole study seems to be not only to please me, but to charm; not only to engage my attention, but to fix my heart. Is not my trial a severe one, *Marianne*? Yet, if I can but give pleasure to Mr. *Astell*, and escape censure, I must bear my own feelings as well as I can.

My greatest trouble, at present, is the want of your company, at a time when I stand so much in need of it. I have no society in the house with me, of my own Sex, for *Kitty Burrell* is always with the Gentlemen; *Byron*, however, endeavours, as much as possible, to get rid of her; she is, therefore, generally left with Mr. *Astell*, and neither of them seems to be displeased; though I think I can see, that *Kitty* would rather chuse *Byron*: You do not wonder at *that*, my Dear — I was not acquainted with *him* when I married Mr. *Astell*.

Miss

Miss *Barnell* is not destitute of sense, but she is too much inclined to give way to her passions; and young Women, who chuse to mix a good deal with the Men, should be particularly careful to keep their passions in order. --- But I have too much reason to watch over my own conduct, to attend to, or to find fault with, the carriage of other people: And I fancy I am pretty well watched. I look upon *Kitty* as a sort of Spy over me, from the little observations I have made on her behaviour --- Yet, whether it is by Mr. *Astell's* order, or whether she thinks Mr. *Byron* is more civil to me than to her, I cannot tell --- The attentions of such a Man cannot but be flattering. I am afraid of them for many reasons.

Pray write to me, and fortify me against myself: Let me hear whether

Mr. *Randolph* improves upon you as much as I expect, for I should imagine, that the uncertainty of his succeeding with you at his first address, rendered him much less agreeable than he really is. I am quite glad that you are, at last, become sensible of the tenderness of so deserving a Man.

I have written to Mrs. *Oswald*, but as yet no answer.

I am, my dear *Marianne*,

with my usual sincerity,

Yours, very affectionately,

MARIA ASTELL.

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LETTER XXXI.

Miss Hales to Mrs. Astell.

I Pity you, my dear Friend, and do assure you, that I would not, for a great deal, be in *your* situation, because I fear I should not conduct myself so well. You have a very difficult part to act; yet, I dare say, you will support it with the greatest propriety. Men are not so formidable, *Maria*, as I had imagined them to be. --- This *Randolph* idolizes me so much, that I am afraid he will spoil me: He lets me do just what I please with him--- In return, as I owe him the greatest consideration for such a winning behaviour, I am determined to make him as happy as I can. He is really a very amiable Man; he improves upon me every day.

Yours truly L^d 5 I have

I have received a Letter from Mrs. *Oswald*---She tells me, that she has wrote to you; she also tells me, that she has got the finest fluttering Fellow of a Lover that ever exhibited himself in that character. Rather let me call him an Admirer, adds she, for I can hardly think that such a Rattle-pate can ever be soberly and sedately enamoured with any thing, except his dear self.

The day after I received this intelligence from Mrs. *Oswald*, I happened to meet with Colonel *Frampton* again. By way of chat, I told him, that I believed Mrs. *Oswald* would not long have any right to that name, as she was eagerly addressed by a Man generally reckoned successful, Sir *Anthony Woodfield*.

I expected a smile from the Colonel for my information, as Sir *Anthony's* character is, I find, very well known:
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But he changed colour immediately, turned his head, and appeared to be uncommonly agitated.

I was sorry I had said any thing to disconcert him, though as I had, accidentally, embarrassed him, I thought I had a good opportunity to see if I could make any discoveries for our Friend: I therefore said, I shall be very glad to hear of her being inclined to listen to an agreeable Man, for after having been unhappily married, she deserves to be happily so.

Do you think, Madam, replied he, with the gravest face imaginable, that she will be happy with Sir *Anthony Woodfield*?

I really cannot tell, answered I, but if she likes him, I hope she will be happy with him.

You are sure, then, that she likes him? said he, hastily.

No --- I am *not* sure, for she mentioned him in a manner which left me very doubtful with regard to her sentiments concerning him. Do you imagine, Colonel, that he will be suitable to her?

Upon my word, replied he, fretfully, I am no judge at all of the Lady's inclinations: You cannot apply to a more improper person in the world.

He then turned from me, as if he chose neither to hear nor to say any more upon the subject. I observed him thoroughly, however, all the rest of the time we were together, and I thought he appeared dejected, though I spoke to him more than once; so often, indeed, that *Randolph* at last seemed afraid of trusting me with him. He kept himself close to my elbow, with his eyes fixed on my face.

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Conscious of having no ill design, I told him, with a smile, that having inadvertently mentioned something which had, I believed, disconcerted the Colonel, I was willing to endeavour to make an atonement for my fault.

Here *Randolph* began to look foolish. In short, I thought both the Men mad; but *his* behaviour was very different from *Frampton's*, who looked sullenly discontented: The other appeared to be actually terrified to death, just as if I had given *him* up for the Colonel. He followed me with an eager, anxious face, which seemed to demand what I was about, and why I took so much notice of *Frampton*? If he, by accident, touched my hand, I felt *his* tremble, and such sighs burst from him, while he leaned over my chair, that I was afraid they would blow my hair out of curl. I could have

have almost laughed, had I not considered that it was his affection for me which made him so restless and suspicious, and that few Men love with so much sincerity and tenderness. Determining, therefore, to exert my compassion towards him, I turned about, and threw all the regard I felt for him into my countenance—Giving him my hand, at the same time, I asked him what was the matter with him? Whether he was not well?

The softened tone of my voice, my freely-offered hand, and the kindness of my enquiring, not only kindled new pleasure in his eyes, but gave his heart a sincere delight. It certainly increased his tenderness, and made him not a little ashamed of having entertained any suspicious injurious to me.

Catching my hand eagerly, he carried it to his lips, thanked me for my
 atten-

attention to him, and said, that he had been oppressed with a violent head-ach.

I could not help laughing at the unreasonable symptoms of jealousy he had discovered, and at his address to prevent my being offended --- His eyes were immediately opened: He whispered in my ear, pressing my hand at the same moment, dear Miss *Hales*, forgive me --- Did you but know yourself with what ardent tenderness I doat on you, surely you would make a little allowance for my fears: You have, indeed, already made allowance for them. Your smiles, your good humoured behaviour, and your last affectionate questions, sufficiently convince me that you pity, that you pardon, too, anxieties, which must be inseparable from a passion for you; at least in the degree I feel it.

I could

I could not but be pleased with his obliging manner of acknowledging himself in an error—Jealousy, indeed, is a very troublesome passion; yet would you, *Maria*, think the Man loved you as he ought, who could see you very attentive to another, and be, at the same time, perfectly at ease?--- To say truth, I was by no means dissatisfied with *Randolph's* behaviour --- There is a respectful diffidence in his manner, which is very pleasing; I may add, extremely insinuating. --- But I have talked enough of myself, and of him who will soon be, I imagine, a second self. --- Adieu, my dear *Maria*: Be upon your guard against the too agreeable *Friend*, lest he imperceptibly slides into the *Lover*: Such a transition is mighty easy in certain situations.

Once more Adieu.

LETTER XXXII.

Mr. BYRON to Sir GEORGE GRAY.

WHAT transport is there in being for ever near the object which is most dear to us on earth ; in having it brought home to us, in soothing, cherishing, and entertaining, from morning to night, the sweet Mistress of our affections, and in seeing that we succeed in our attempts to give her pleasure, even to a degree that makes her tremble with delight ! --- Precisely in this situation am I, at present, with Mrs. *Astell* --- By the satisfaction which glistens in her eyes, by the modest timidity which glows upon her cheeks, and by the half-formed accents which flutter upon her

her lips, I am every hour convinced more and more, that she cannot look upon me with indifference. Yet, while every Look, and every Gesture, fill me with rapture, as they assure me of her partiality in my favour, every effort which she makes to suppress the involuntary proofs of it, increases my admiration and esteem --- How great is her discretion, and, in this age, how uncommon, as almost every married Woman seems to take a pride --- as well as a pleasure --- in giving encouragement not only to Admiration, but to Love. What an exemplary Wife does this angelic Creature make to the wretch her Husband! --- I cannot possibly guess at his motives for bringing her here, unless he intends me a favour, which even the most modern Husband seldom confers upon his Friend --- Be it as
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it may, I feel for this charming Woman; I see her struggling with an inclination, which, while it transports me out of my senses, Virtue and Duty will not permit her to yield to it, and which I dare not, from the sincerity of my tenderness for her, venture to encourage, lest we should both forget ourselves, lest I should contribute to the destruction of the Angel I adore.

Tell me, *Gray*, can a Man be said to love a Woman as he ought, who, in order to gratify his passion for her, lessens her in her own eyes, in the eyes of her Friends, in the eyes of every body, who would otherwise revere her character. --- To deprive myself, then, of an opportunity to be such a villain, I am going to do, what few Men who love like me, *would* do, I am going to endeavour to place a guard

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guard between the dangerously-charming *Maria* and myself, which shall prevent too close a connection between us. Not that I doubt the Lady's fortitude, but I extremely distrust my own strength of mind, as I am naturally of an amorous complexion, and as I am ardently attached to this delicious Woman, who is left perpetually with me alone, (for *Kitty Burrell* and *Astell* are for ever flying from us, and leaving us together.) — Should I forget what I owe to her, and solicit, with importunity, for a return of tenderness — What may I not have to answer for? Circumstanced as we are, I should be particularly careful to conceal all my feelings on her account from her—I have, therefore, though it has cost me a great deal, — (severe has been the conflict in my breast upon this agitating occasion) — I have
written

written to Mrs. *Oswald*, to beg the favour of her company, that she may give her fair Friend the pleasure of meeting her here --- If she can comply with my request, I know I shall be kept in order: If she refuses, I give myself up for lost --- and the Lord have mercy upon *Maria*, for I shall, I fear, very soon find it out of my power to shew her any.

When I had finished my Letter to Mrs. *Oswald*, I went to Mrs. *Astell*, and acquainted her with the contents of it. She blushed like crimson, and then, turning pale as ashes, sunk back in her chair. I forgot every thing at that instant—My *Retenue* fled away—I overset the table, caught her in my arms, strained her to my bosom with a fervency which immediately recovered her, and breathed
a thou-

a thousand tender sighs on her languid cheek. Then, in a moment recollecting that she was the Wife of the Man whom I received in hospitality, and called my Friend—(Curse on the ill-timed recollection!) I was ready to dash her from me like a poisonous reptile, though she was really sweeter than fresh-blown roses, and purer than new-fallen snow.

Setting her down again in her chair, with a coolness which froze every drop of blood in my veins, I said, I hope, Madam, you are not ill.

Mr. *Byron*! exclaimed the dear creature, with looks expressive of astonishment and regret, as if she not only saw, but felt, keenly felt the sudden change in me ---

I hope you are not ill, Mrs. *Astell*—continued I, with softer accents—

No

No—not now; replied she, sighing, in a plaintive tone—

How glad am I to hear you say so, cried I, still more tenderly; you frightened me excessively, added I, with eyes which discovered every ardent emotion of my soul, while I seized both her hands, and pressed them to my bosom.

No, Sir,—answered she, faintly, withdrawing her hands at the same time—I felt a giddiness in my head, but I am better now.

She then rose and left me—I am glad, however, that I have sent to Mrs. Oswald: I dare not trust myself with her: Nor can I conceive why *Astell* brought *Kitty Burrell* here, for she seems to be the reigning Sultana; and though she is as wanton as she is vain, she carries it, I think, with a high

high hand. She will make a pretty extravagant sort of a Mistress: Yet I really know no more of her than just what I see at table. Finding she can make nothing of me herself, she very conveniently, or, I may say, very cruelly, leaves me to Mrs. *Astell*. Now, from whence could possibly arise the violent agitation in the latter, on my telling her that I had sent to invite Mrs. *Oswald*? I swear I am not able to develope this mystery.—The very best of Women are certainly most inscrutable creatures.

Adieu.

The END of the FIRST VOLUME.